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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to help student councils better represent students and improve school life. An introductory chapter presents a short history of student councils beginning with the formation of the National Association of Student Councils in 1931. Chapter 1 outlines responsibilities of a student council and its relationship with students, its advisor, the principal, the faculty, and the school board. Chapter 2 reviews election procedures including nomination procedures, campaign rules, voting procedures, and installation of officers and representatives. The third chapter lists the responsibilities of members and of each officer. The steps required for planning and evaluating projects are listed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 explains how student council committees work, including organization, group dynamics, and leadership. The sixth chapter presents parliamentary procedures and alternatives to them such as informational conferences, round table discussions, panel discussions, symposiums, and "buzz groups." The final chapter outlines the necessary components of constitution and bylaws. A lengthy appendix contains forms and procedures used by student councils, a list of typical student council projects, and model bylaws. (JM)

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Student Council Handbook

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

The National Association of Secondary School Principals
Office of Student Activities
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Foreword

Students, teachers, and administrators share in the rights and responsibilities of a school community. Student councils, by representing students' needs and interests to educators and by developing programs to meet those needs and interests, contribute very significantly to making the community "work."

Most educators recognize that an active student council can greatly increase opportunities for learning and growth among the students in their schools. Through student council activities, students participate in social, academic, and citizenship experiences that will enrich their lives as students and as adults. Council members themselves develop and exercise civic responsibility in the school and community as they make choices, plan and carry out programs, and deal with the responses of their constituencies and others.

Through its sponsorship of the National Associations of Student Councils and Student Activity Advisers, NASSP demonstrates its commitment to both the reality and potential of student councils. We salute the student councils of the Bicentennial Era for their energy and dedication.

The publication of this handbook is an important event for NASC/NASAA as well as NASSP members. We believe that these guidelines will help student councils to realize their full potential in representing students and improving life in the school community.

Owen B. Kiernan
Executive Director, NASSP

History of Student Councils

In 1930, the National Association of Student Councils was a dream in the hearts and minds of a few young people. The next year, it became a reality.

Warren Shull, 1930-31 student council president at Sapulpa High School in Sapulpa, Okla., was one of the young people who most wanted to make that dream a reality. At the 1931 convention of the National Education Association in Los Angeles, he presented a proposal for the new national student organization to Willis A. Sutton, then NEA president and superintendent of schools in Atlanta, Ga.

Impressed by Shull's proposal and his dedication, Sutton asked him to call an organizational meeting. Student delegates from eight schools elected Shull first national president, with authorization to do whatever was necessary to get the organization started and to plan the next annual meeting with the NEA at Atlantic City, N.J. The organization (originally named the National Association of Student Government Officers, changed in 1936 to the National Association of Student Officers, and again changed in 1940 to the present name) adopted these five objectives:

- to establish and maintain a medium for exchanging ideas helpful to high school students and for promoting the growth of student participation in high school administration.
- to organize high schools into a closer relationship
- to form an integral and active department of the National Education Association
- to advance the cause of education through a closer relationship between administration and students
- to work toward international goodwill.

The Early Years

In 1932 at Atlantic City, Shull was re-elected national president and named by the students to serve concurrently as the first executive secretary. In the next four years, he wrote the constitution and bylaws for NASGO, (and later for NASO); provided for inclusion of junior high school student councils in the association; designed an emblem; suggested guidelines for forming student councils; planned national meetings with the cooperation of hosting student councils; encouraged the formation of state associations as well as individual student councils; and otherwise worked to promote the organization.

Faced with the adverse economic conditions of the early 1930s and slow membership growth, Shull hitchhiked to and from the national meetings (Atlantic City, N.J., in 1932; Chicago, Ill., in 1933; Washington, D.C., in 1934; and Denver, Colo., in 1935), borrowed money, solicited help from civic groups, personally sponsored money-raising projects, and used a part of his college loan fund to help get the young organization on its feet. He finally interrupted his college education in 1933 to devote full time to the association. By 1936, when he turned leadership of the association over to NEA, Shull's perseverance and dedication to the student council idea and the early enthusiasm of other students, educators, and individual advisers had made great contributions to the survival and growth of the National Association of Student Councils.

Affiliation with NASSP

The organization has been sponsored by various groups. During its one-year affiliation in 1935 with the National Association of Student Editors and the Student Graphic Arts Society, its headquarters was transferred to Washington, D. C., under the guidance of Joy Elmer Morgan and C. C. Harvey of the NEA's Division of Publications. The next year, NEA's Department of Secondary School Principals (now the independent NASSP) provided a base for the association.

In 1937, a group of council advisers that had met with the NEA as an allied organization since 1927 was invited to meet jointly with the student association. In 1938, Grace M. Anderson, president of that group of advisers, which then had the lengthy name of National Association of Sponsors of Student Participation in School Administration, became executive secretary of NASO. She served in this capacity until 1942, when Paul E. Elicker, executive secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), assumed the leadership of NASC on a part-time basis.

NASSP's sponsorship was made formal in 1943. Under the leadership of Elicker (1940-59), NASC grew to a point where a full-time

director was needed to handle its activities. In 1947, Gerald M. Van Pool was employed by NASSP to serve as its first full-time director of student activities. Ellsworth Tompkins contributed to NASC's further growth during his years as NASSP executive secretary (1960-68).

DEVELOPING THE NASSP OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

As the director's position was a new one, there were no guidelines or precedents to follow. It was obvious that much time could be spent on simply answering correspondence, but it was also obvious that NASC would have to do more than write letters to justify its existence.

It would have to provide talented leadership, help to determine the aims and objectives of the student council movement, and outline worthy projects and activities. As a practical matter, it would also have to build NASC membership to obtain operating funds for new services.

During the first years, much of the work of the Office of Student Activities was promotional; dozens of mailings went out to all of the secondary schools in the country, urging them to organize student councils and to affiliate with NASC. The mailings included model council constitutions and a step-by-step procedure for setting up a new council. As a result of these efforts, NASC membership climbed to nearly 10,000 schools.

Surveys

Beginning with a 1951 survey on student council practices and procedures, the Office of Student Activities collected valuable information on such topics as organization and activities of student councils, leadership training procedures, financial practices, the adviser's role, membership practices, how to evaluate a student council, how to write a council constitution, the student activities program, and many others. Articles in NASSP and NASC publications reported the results of the surveys.

Prior to these articles, little had been published about student councils. The articles helped to give the student council movement a sense of direction, to explain the reasons for student council, and to help high school principals and council advisers to fit student council into student activity programs.

State Associations

In 1947, 22 states had loosely-organized state student council associations. Only the state of Virginia had a full-time secretary, who was paid by the state PTA. In most other states, the state secretary was the student council adviser who hosted the annual state convention. When the convention ended, so did the secretary's term of office; and the host for the next year's convention became the new secretary.

That year, NASC offered its support and services to the incumbent state secretaries in an effort to enable them to serve a three-year miminum term, thereby providing a stronger base for the state associations. A representative of NASC visited almost every state, explaining the advantage of a well-organized state association, and offered help in rewriting the constitution to effect the necessary changes.

To states that did not have associations, NASC sent model state constitutions and a step-by-step procedure for holding a state constitutional convention. A representative of NASC attended many of these conventions and helped to direct the formation of a new association and the election of the first officers.

After a state association had been organized, it was necessary that it get involved in worthwhile activities. NASC encouraged the state organizations by awarding certificates of appreciation to those associations that had completed significant projects aimed at growth: holding a state or regional convention, publishing a state newsletter, sponsoring a state project, recruiting new member schools, sending delegates to the NASC conference, and other achievements. In the process of pursuing goals and seeking recognition, the state associations were strengthened.

Today, state student council associations are under the direction of various state organizations: associations of secondary school principals, the education departments, education associations, and student activity associations.

Summer Workshops

The first state summer student council workshop, held in Conway, Ark., in the late 1940s, was such a success that council leaders in other states sought information from NASC on how to organize their own workshops. After visits to several workshops and conferences with the planners and participants, the NASC staff published a comprehensive guide to organizing summer workshops and a suggested curriculum for a week-long program. The idea caught on so quickly and was promoted so enthusiastically by NASC that about 100 workshops were held across the country in the summer of 1970.

In 1952, a small workshop was held in the Rocky Mountains, near Denver. This workshop was the beginning of NASC's annual national student council workshop at Camp Cheley, where hundreds of student leaders have received valuable training in directing a student activity program. Other national workshops under NASC's direction have been held in Ohio, Arkansas, and Delaware.

Programs for International Understanding

Staff conferences and discussions with student council leaders led to a program in international affairs, with the emphasis on enabling council members to observe the people and institutions of other countries and to become personally involved in a program of international understanding in their own communities. The first NASC European Tour for International Understanding was held in 1956.

In 1974, NASC's first International Student Leadership Program took 100 U. S. students to five European cities for meetings with student leaders and visits to famous sites. In addition, students participated in intensive leadership training sessions in their shipboard classrooms.

NASC Publications

NASC published a newsletter for many years under various names: *Student Life, NASC Highlights,* and *Student Life Highlights.* Seeking to provide more visibility and more information for student councils, NASC initiated a magazine, *Student Advocate,* in April 1974. *Student Advocate* contains articles on national and school issues, reports from student councils, youth news, and a column on legal issues that relate to secondary school students. Articles by council leaders and advisers are welcome.

In the early 1960s, NASC began requesting authors with expertise on student leadership subjects to write booklets for its membership. Originally called the New Directions Series, these special publications are mailed free to NASC members several times a year. Among the topics covered in special publications have been: public relations, parliamentary procedure, organizing junior high and middle school councils, planning and evaluating council projects, communications, workshop planning, and many others.

Internal Organization

The National Association of Student Councils and its companion organization, the National Association of Student Activity Advisers, are administered through the NASSP Office of Student Activities. NASSP's executive director, Owen B. Kiernan, serves as NASC's

executive officer. Terry Giroux is NASSP director of student activities.

A 14-member Advisory Committee, composed of seven regional student representatives and seven regional principal and adviser representatives, is an important channel for member input into NASC decisions. The Committee makes program and publications recommendations directly to the NASSP Board of Directors, through the NASSP executive director.

In 1973-74 the Advisory Committee drafted goals for NASC:

- To provide technical and physical assistance for all student councils so they may become more effective representative organizations within their schools and communities. Implementation:
  - —Encouraging members of the school administration to involve students in the decision making process.
  - —Encouraging student involvement in all phases of school programs.
- To encourage all student councils to become effective members of the national, state, and area student council associations.
- To maintain and expand the communication channels of NASC.

In order to implement the goals formulated by the Advisory Committee, NASC encourages the development of new student councils; assists student councils to become more effective representative organizations within their schools and communities; helps to organize state associations; and provides state executive secretaries with information and assistance.

NASC also speaks out before meetings of government departments and private associations on behalf of young people and helps to keep the student council movement and young people in the public eye. NASC supports communication among student councils and employs its resources to help with problems that may be impossible to solve on the local level.

1 Student Council in the School Community

A student council is a group of students elected by a given constituency of fellow students. Every student in the school has a voice in student affairs through a representative.

A student council will provide an effective voice for students only when it makes a commitment to represent all student groups in the school, has a clear perception of its role within the total school program, and defines its objectives in such a way that they can be understood and accepted by students, faculty, and administration. If the understanding and acceptance are mutual, there is no limit to the contributions that students can make to their education through the student council.

To represent the students of the school, councils must be involved in many kinds of projects. Some projects may be social in nature, but there must also be projects which emphasize the development of dialogs between the council and various professionals throughout a school system. These dialogs are crucial to the council's efforts to represent students, because they allow information to come and go between both groups.

The council should work to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and aspirations of the students and to develop an ability to present student perspectives in appropriate ways. Developing this understanding and ability can be difficult, since officers and many representatives are new to their positions each year.

However, the difficulties are considerably lessened by the student council adviser. The adviser, as a faculty member, gives the council an important perspective on student problems and attitudes. Furthermore, because most advisers serve for several years, they can also give valuable advice gained from the experiences of past years.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STUDENT BODY

Even though the council is composed of students elected from the student body, it should not assume that it *automatically* represents the student population. Accurate representation is not a simple matter. For instance, the members of a council tend to be popular and active in student organizations, while maintaining reasonably good grades. Obviously, there are many students whose attitudes toward and involvement with school are very different from those of most council members.

This fact does not mean that councils cannot represent the students; certainly, they can. But they must work hard at it.

Good representation comes through a year-long effort in five basic areas: maintaining an open membership policy; scheduling a wide variety of activities; developing communication with students; maintaining a respectable council image; and participating in educational and community meetings.

Maintaining an "Open" Membership Policy

Maintaining open membership is essential if students are to feel the council is "their" organization. The council's encouragement, combined with non-restrictive requirements for participating in council activities, can heighten and expand students' interest and participation—and thereby improve representation.

Here are some ways in which councils can encourage broad student participation:

- Keep all committee memberships open to anyone in the school, and actively recruit members from the student body.
- Design election processes that do not discriminate against minorities.
- Hold business and committee meetings during school so that people who cannot stay after school can participate.
- Minimize or eliminate grade requirements for membership in the council.

Scheduling of Activities

Social activities, educational programs, and service to others should be included in a representative council's plans.

Social activities provide opportunities for friends to get together or for people to meet others. Many of a school's social activities are shaped by tradition. Dances, homecomings, and holiday programs are typical social events.

Educational programs are designed either to contribute additional information to regular courses or to offer ideas or skills that are not ordinarily covered in the curriculum. These programs can take many forms, including speakers, clubs, field trips, once-a-week special interest classes, mini-course days, etc. It's important to remember that academic and personal interests vary and that some programs will appeal to only a small number of people.

Service functions can be designed either to help the school (i.e., cleanups, buying new trophy cases, painting the bathrooms a bright color, etc.,) or the community (collecting food and clothing for people in need, clean ups, etc.).

Developing Effective Communication with Students

The responsibility of the student council to design and implement effective *two-way* communication channels is of utmost importance for all of the other activities and projects it undertakes. Not only must a council know what interests students have, but students must be informed as to how the council is choosing and developing projects and activities that meet their interests. Councils must examine how they send information to the student body and how they obtain their information about students' interests.

To encourage two-way communication between councils and students, councils may:

a. Have a scheduled time during which representatives report to constituents.

b. Work with the social studies or English departments to arrange class study on topics of particular student concern.

c. Use unique publicity forms—"snappy" announcements, eye-catching posters, pins, etc.

d. Hold assemblies to publicize special events.

e. Hold frequent open student council meetings.

f. Have the representatives ask their constituents for ideas and opinions on a regular basis.

g. Establish standing committees to deal with long-term student concerns.

h. Publish a student council newsletter.

i. Make sure that representatives follow through on suggestions from their constituents.

j. Hold open discussions and forums without using parliamentary procedure (in addition to regular, parliamentary business meetings).

k. Have officers periodically visit homerooms to talk with the students.

l. Encourage minority participation.

m. Design and use some sort of evaluation instrument for representatives.

n. Use public opinion polls.

o. Have frequent meetings of school club officers.

p. Make sure that the council is aware of the needs of both academic and vocational students.

Earning Students' Respect

To be effective, the student council must earn the *respect* and the *confidence* of the student body. Students need to feel that the council is responsive to their wishes and that representatives are competent to handle their many responsibilities.

The degree of respect and confidence students have in the council is closely related to the council's image. Each year, council members *earn* that image. To an extent, a council inherits the image of past councils, but it can be changed if the council feels it necessary.

The council's image comes from many factors, ranging from the kind of motions a council passes to the kinds of dances it holds. No one activity and no one person determines the council's image; yet, each activity and each council member certainly contributes to its development.

To develop a good image, a student council may:

a. Publicize the positive actions and activities of the council.

b. Increase the contact students have with student council officers.

c. Recognize, respect, and encourage the work of other student organizations in the school.

d. Make sure that open council meetings are well planned.

e. Have a committee to deal with student suggestions, questions, complaints, etc.

f. Actively solicit student opinion.

g. Avoid an elitist or cliquish image, including having secret jokes, special greetings for council members only, or always sitting together in the cafeteria.

h. Work closely with the school paper to get important council business covered.

i. Respect council privileges by using hall passes and class excuses for their proper purposes, maintaining an orderly council room, and being attentive during council meetings, etc.

j. Welcome new students to the school.

Participating in Educational and Community Meetings

In its efforts to represent the students, the council will find that it has occasion to send representatives to civic meetings and educational policy boards. The students who attend these meetings must be of top caliber, since the adult members of the community may see these representatives as speaking for "all students."

Attending these meetings is most important, since so many civic and educational groups take action which affects students' lives. The student representatives should:

- Serve as *spokespersons* for the council and the students.
- Attend important civic and educational meetings, especially if asked to do so by adult members of those groups.
- Fulfill all responsibilities they agree to take on for these adult groups.
- Be ready to admit that they don't know all the answers.
- Inform the students and other council members about what happens at these meetings and take suggestions from students to succeeding meetings.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ADVISER

The adviser is a faculty member appointed by the administration to work with the student council. The job is a demanding one, requiring both a personal time commitment and a knowledge of the workings of the school and educational system.

The adviser, perhaps more than any other person in the student council, is aware of the various perspectives of students, faculty, and administration.

Advisers may experience real problems if councils take stands on issues which conflict with their opinions. Nonetheless, the role of an adviser is a rewarding one, and advisers are certainly needed by student organizations.

The relationship between advisers and student councils is a rather complex topic, since it includes both *formal, organizational elements* of the advisers' powers and the *personal interactions* between advisers and officers.

Some "formal" responsibilities of advisers are to:

1. Offer suggestions to students

2. Help students to monitor all correspondence to community organizations, ensuring that the council is acting within its scope of authority.

3. Remind students to be thorough and accurate in fulfilling their responsibilities.

4. Accompany student council members to various meetings held outside of school.

5. Report to the faculty on the activities of the council.

6. Make sure that committees are meeting their responsibilities and deadlines.

7. Help students work through any major disagreements which might undermine the council's ability to function.

8. Maintain accurate records to help future advisers.

9. Work with students involved in budget-planning.

10. Attend all after-school student council functions.

11. Pass all student council mail to the president.

12. Help the president to maintain and improve the general functioning of the council.

13. Supervise students who are using school equipment.

14. Help to resolve difficulties between teachers and student council members.

Complementing these formal responsibilities must be the adviser's personal awareness of his or her role in guiding students. Advisers must constantly be aware that students are affected not only by advisers' words and actions, but also by much more subtle things like voice intonation, facial expression, and enthusiasm or the lack of it. Advisers affect not only the student council organization, but also the attitudes and feelings of the student council members.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRINCIPAL

The principal is the most important person in the functioning of the school, having innumerable professional and legal responsibilities to the faculty and the students. The student council must keep the principal informed at all times about its actions. It must realize that, as a result of the educational and legal obligations the school has to

its students, a principal must maintain the final approval authority for all projects.

The principal's wide perspective on education and knowledge of the particular school can be valuable resources to student councils. A healthy principal-council working relationship helps make the responsibilities of both easier to fulfill.

A council must make sure that the principal:

1. Is informed of all motions the council passes and all activities the council wishes to sponsor.

2. Is invited to all business meetings.

3. Is informed of rumors that could cause disruption or misunderstanding.

4. Is not put in an unfavorable light by any correspondence or action of the council.

5. Is respected as a professional educator in all council communications.

6. Is used as a resource person.

7. Is kept abreast of student thinking, perhaps through a student advisory committee.

8. Is treated as a person, as well as the head of the school.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FACULTY

The faculty provides extensive policy resources for the students of the school. Through their professional skills and personal interests, teachers can enhance the learning environment of students in many different ways. A council is indeed wise to develop a strong, working relationship with the faculty. The council can:

1. Welcome new faculty members to the school.

2. Provide student aides to help teachers a few days before school begins.

3. Rotate responsibility for chaperoning activities among as many teachers as possible.

4. Be careful not to have students consistently miss the same classes.

5. Invite faculty members to council meetings.

6. Establish regular discussions with faculty members.

7. Place copies of the minutes in all teachers' mailboxes.

8. Have an occasional morning brunch for the teachers.

9. Remember teachers on holidays.

10. Have student "teach day."

11. Prepare brief biographies of teachers and read them over the public address system or publish them in the school's newspaper.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD

As students become interested in and involved with various aspects of the educational process, many councils are coming into contact with local and state school boards. Professional educators realize the value of student input, and council members are expressing student viewpoints by serving as advisory persons to school boards or school policy-making committees—and, in some areas, as *members* of boards or policy committees.

Presentations to School Boards

Students must be completely prepared for such presentations, since they may encounter opposition on issues from teacher, administrator, or parent groups, as well as from members of the board itself. If their presentations are made well, students may be invited to serve on committees that develop the wording of policies and present them to the board for approval. Research is an important key to the success of any work that students do for a school board.

Students may also have contact with the numerous long-term planning groups in school systems that design ways to implement educational policies and directives. These groups determine the content of courses, grading systems, course offerings, etc. Obviously, students can provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of the courses, since they are the people for whom the courses are designed.

If students are asked to speak before such committees simply to inform the members about student attitudes, there may not be a need to do extensive preparation. However, students who are asked to be full members on committees that are developing proposals for educational change must do a considerable amount of research.

Whenever student council members make presentations or testimonies as official representatives of students, they should:

1. *Research the topic fully,* including the aspects that may be counter to student viewpoints.

2. *Determine how the group before which students are to speak runs its meetings.* Visit a public hearing, a committee meeting of

school department chairpersons, etc. Do students need to notify any officials in advance of their wish to offer opinions or present testimony?

3. *Find out who else plans to speak.* What points will these other speakers make? Should these opinions be rebutted in the student presentations? What kinds of questions might the board members ask the student representatives in light of the other testimonies?

4. *Explore the composition of the committee or group which makes final decisions and recommendations on the issue.* What questions will they have for the students? Can their present attitudes be determined in hopes that the student representatives can offer proposals which will be acceptable to the members and also beneficial for the students?

5. *Know the points about which students feel strongly.* If students want a complete change in a policy, what kind of compromises would be satisfactory, if any? Could a small concession now lead to more concessions in the future?

6. *Be aware of the importance of personal appearance.* Will what a student representative wears hinder or enhance the audience's willingness to listen?

7. *Distribute copies of the statement to the group being addressed.* Will members need a copy of the student position to recall what was said, or will a summary suffice?

8. *Maintain good eye contact when speaking.*

9. *Use visual aids to dramatize points.*

10. *Be courteous,* no matter what the situation.

11. *Allow time to answer questions* which may be raised by the student presentation.

12. *Document as much information as possible,* both in the presentation and in the written material to be given to the group.

13. *Listen carefully to questions;* avoid answering questions that are framed to place the student position in an unfavorable light, no matter how the reply is stated. Example: "If this board passes an open lunch policy, will students continue to disrupt the school?"

14. *Consider media coverage* and its appropriateness for the situation.

2 Elections

During officer and representative elections, all eyes of the school are focused on the student council—its achievements and shortcomings, its issues and its personalities. At this time, the council stands or falls on its record. It is also the time to think about the future, what can be built upon and what should be discarded.

New life and new personalities will be taking over the council positions, and the present student council must ensure that the transition is smooth. The place to begin is with nomination and election procedures. These procedures must be carefully planned and executed. A mistake could lead to a challenge of the election results.

THE NOMINATION PROCEDURE

The nomination procedure is twofold in purpose: 1) it requires each candidate to have some initial show of support and 2) it adds dignity to the election process by making prospective candidates work for the privilege of being elected. The nomination process should be simple enough to enable candidates representing any element of the student body to run.

Most of all *it should be the students' process,* with only minimal involvement from the faculty and administration. Certainly, no student officer wants to be elected under the accusation of "being a puppet of the administration or faculty."

The nomination process is rather delicate. It may be better to risk letting a person run who has little chance of winning than to exclude him from the election and open the council to criticism.

Nomination Methods

1. *Self-nominations.* This method is the most simple; a person declares himself to be a candidate and registers at some designated location.

2. *Self-nomination with support petitions.* In this process, a person officially becomes a candidate when he submits a petition with a certain number of signatures of supporters on it. If a supporter signs for more than one person who is seeking the same office, the supporter's signature is eliminated from petitions for that office, but the candidacy of the office-seeker is not affected unless the elimination of the signature lowers the number of supporters below the minimum number required for candidacy.

3. *Petition method in which a certain number of signatures automatically elects a person to the position of representative.* See the section on election methods.

4. *Any of the above methods,* with the additional requirement that each candidate receive a certain number of signatures from faculty members.

5. *Nomination and/or election from among the council membership.* This procedure may lead to complaints about the officers not directly representing the students.

6. *Write-in.* A strong parliamentary argument can be made for allowing *write-ins as acceptable nominees,* if such write-ins meet the qualifications to hold the office if elected. Many people believe that if the student body writes in a candidate on enough ballots to win the nomination (or election), their will should be followed.

Whatever method of nomination the council decides to use, it must publicize the nomination process thoroughly and clearly state the exact cut-off deadline for nominations to be submitted. The bylaws' references to the nomination process should be flexible enough that a council may vary it from year to year.

CAMPAIGNING AND CAMPAIGN RULES

During campaigning, each candidate tries to convince his fellow students of the wisdom of voting for him. It is a time of tremendous activity, and the council has an obligation to the candidates and the school to ensure that this activity is characterized by fairness and good taste.

Speeches

One important element of a campaign is the *speeches* presented by aspiring officers. An assembly attended by all students who will be voting in the primary election may be held to allow the candidates to make speeches.

The candidates should be given a clear set of rules to follow in making their speeches, with the understanding that a serious violation of these rules could result in the interruption and termination of the speech by the adviser. A serious violation of rules might consist of the use of slander or falsehood.

However, the speeches must provide a fair opportunity to all candidates to express their opinions honestly. Because of the possible legal implications of any kind of interference, the adviser and principal should establish a workable policy for each school in advance of the assembly.

Since a large number of representatives' positions might make it impractical for candidates to give speeches, other methods of informing the school about their qualifications and ideas should be designed. One method might be to publish a "Qualifications and Ideas" information sheet, in which candidates have an opportunity to express themselves. This information sheet could be distributed to the voting students.

Whatever rules are finally established for the campaigning and speeches, a meeting of all the candidates might be held for the purpose of explaining and answering questions about both sets of rules.

Below are a set of suggested rules for campaigning and a set of rules for speeches.

Suggested Campaign Rules

1. The cost of campaign materials should not exceed $_____.
2. Posters shall not exceed _____feet in any dimension.
3. All posters must be approved and signed by the student council adviser and may be hung only in the designated areas around the school.
4. All posters hung in individual classrooms must have the approval of the teacher in charge of that room.
5. Car parades are not allowed.
6. Distribution of campaign material shall not interfere with the educational atmosphere of classes.
7. No campaigning shall be allowed on election day.

8. The candidates for each office shall be allowed to use the public address system one morning prior to the election, according to the schedule established by the student council elections committee. Speeches shall not exceed _____minutes in length.

9. Candidates are responsible for the removal of their own posters.

Rules for the Speech Assembly

1. Literature may be distributed in the auditorium lobby as students leave the assembly.

2. All candidates who are present in school that day shall make their own speeches.

3. No introductory speech for one candidate by another is allowed.

4. Speeches for the office of president shall not exceed___minutes in length; speeches for the other offices shall not exceed___minutes in length.

In addition to visual publicity and the speech assembly, many councils try to arrange a time for candidates to answer questions from the student body. One way to arrange question-and-answer sessions is by working with the social studies department to arrange for class visits.

THE ELECTION PROCESS

Many schools use both primary and general elections to select council officers. *Primary elections* are held to reduce the number of candidates to two; the general election selects one of those two candidates to serve. In the general election the winning candidate must have more than 50 percent of the votes cast, while in the primary election each of the two winning candidates must receive a *plurality*—each must receive more votes than any other candidate.

In both primary and general elections, write-in votes should be accepted as long as the person written in meets the qualifications to serve if elected.

The time of the elections for officers may differ from the time of elections for the representatives. Officers are usually elected in the spring prior to the school year in which they are to serve. Representatives may also be elected in the spring, but some schools choose to hold the elections in the fall or at mid-year. There are advantages and disadvantages to all three times.

Representative Elections in the Spring

Pro: The council can plan during the summer.

The council can start immediately in the fall.

Incoming students can hold representative elections while still in their feeder schools, each feeder school electing a number in proportion to the percentage it contributes to the total class composition in the fall.

Con: If representatives are selected from subject classes or homerooms, administrators may have difficulty in predicting the scheduling arrangements for the following fall.

A representative may be assigned to represent a group whose attitudes are significantly different from his.

Homerooms, social studies classes, etc., are prevented from directly choosing their representatives.

Representative Elections in the Fall

Pro: Each homeroom or class can select its own representative.

Fall elections eliminate the possibility that elected representatives will have moved.

Con: Several good candidates may exist in one homeroom or class, but only one can be chosen.

The council can't do any organizing over the summer, a limitation on early fall projects.

One possible combination of spring and fall elections is to hold the elections for the upper grades in the spring and the incoming grade in the fall. The best solution of course would assure *all* student groups representation according to their numbers.

Representative Elections at Mid-Year

Pro: The council can evaluate its progress during the summer and make plans for the coming semester.

January and February are less busy than fall or late spring months in most schools; the new officers and representatives can use this "slow" period for planning the second semester.

Representatives and officers who will graduate in the spring can help their successors during the first semester of their term.

For seniors, ending a term of office at mid-year means less pressure as graduation and career decisions approach.

Con: The change of representatives at mid-year may make following through on projects somewhat difficult.

A mid-year election campaign may be disruptive to academic studies and to other council activities.

Some projects may be "lost" during summer vacation.

"Open" Election by Petition

Under this rather new method of selecting representatives, mentioned in the section dealing with nomination procedures, a certain number of people sign a petition stating that the candidate is their representative.

Pro: Students can join the council any time during the year (unless a rule exists to the contrary).

Supporters can remove their names from the representative's petition if they are dissatisfied with his performance on their behalf. If the number of a representative's supporters falls below an established number, the representative loses his council seat. Representatives may be reinstated if they can bring the number of signatures back to the required level.

People can select representatives from different classes or homerooms who hold ideas similar to theirs.

Con: Communication to students is made increasingly difficult, as constituents are scattered throughout the school.

Old members might not know new ones.

Representatives who enter halfway through the year have a lot of catching up to do.

VOTING PROCEDURES

It is important for a council to provide reasonable opportunities for all to vote who wish to do so. Therefore, a council must be very conscious of how long the polls are to be open. If voting is done by machines, special care must be taken not to have people avoid voting because they are rushed for time.

Closely tied to maximizing the number of voters is the practice of "registering" students before they are allowed to vote. Some difference of opinion exists, however, on whether registration serves a positive purpose in a school setting. Some feel that it tends to discourage people by making the voting process rather bothersome.

Use of Voting Machines

Many councils are using voting machines as part of a citizenship training effort, since the machines are the same ones used in public elections. The companies or municipal agencies which control these machines must be contacted months in advance of the election, and the deadlines they establish to receive the names of the candidates (in order to place them on the machines) will influence the time schedule the council sets for the primary and general elections. A phone call and followup communications to the local board of elections is essential.

The voting machines are simple to operate, but their operation is new to many people. Therefore, time should be allowed for explanations of how they work. Each machine requires an "attender" to periodically check inside the machine to make sure that it is functioning properly and that the names have not been tampered with. Several other people will be needed to check people's names off the school lists as they vote.

Voters should be required to show positive identification at the registration table, at which council members will have alphabetized lists of the school population. As a person's name is checked off the list, a card which cannot be duplicated should be given to the voter, who in turn gives the card to the "attender" immediately before entering to vote. These "voter cards" must be carefully watched to prevent people from voting more than once.

At the end of the day, the total number of people who voted (according to a count taken from the lists) should match the total count of voters taken from the recorder on the voting machine. The process of checking the number of votes cast, as well as the tabulation of the votes, can be watched by representatives of the candidates, in case there is a discrepancy which might necessitate a re-vote.

It is essential to *allow for write-in candidates.* If the voting machines do not have this capability, a ballot box at the registration desk might serve the purpose. To prevent one person voting twice, voting by both machine *and* ballot would not be allowed.

Ballot Voting

Ballot voting must be handled very carefully, since it is easier to vote illegally by ballot than by machine. One basic rule for ballot voting is to minimize the number of people who handle the ballots before, during, and after the voting.

One school developed a very tight system of distributing ballots to the homerooms, but a representative was caught altering the completed ballots while bringing them to the student council room to be

counted. It is *essential* to limit the number of people who handle the ballots. No one person should be left alone with them, especially before they have been counted.

While ballots are being counted, representatives of the candidates observe the tabulation process. Once they have been counted, the ballots can be locked in the school safe for a period of time, in the event someone wishes to contest the election.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

The installation assembly is important since it marks the time when the elected members of the council officially assume their duties. The principal or the adviser administers an oath of office to the newly elected office-holders. Speeches by the adviser, principal, and student council president and music by the school band are in order. Other school clubs and organizations may wish to have their officers (and possibly members and representatives) take oaths during the same assembly.

3 Responsibilities of Members and Officers

Council members have important duties and responsibilities among themselves and to the rest of the student body. Many councils include descriptions of these responsibilities in their bylaws; often, the responsibilities change as the council grows and changes.

THE PRESIDENT

A student council president is like the captain of a ship. He needs full knowledge of many situations, maturity, sound judgment, and an ability to work with many different kinds of people. A captain who does not possess these abilities may face a mutiny by the crew, or even a shipwreck. The plight of a student council president who lacks the leadership ability to direct council affairs is similar.

Keeping the delicate balance between leading the student council and encouraging *other* officers and members to take on leadership responsibilities is a challenge. In addition, the practical side of being president requires energy, careful management of time, and lots of paperwork.

Listed below are some of the president's responsibilities to council officers, students, administrators and teachers, the community, the next year's council, and the adviser.

Responsibilities to Council Officers

To the vice president:

a. Provide training in all important council skills and operations so that the vice president can assume the president's duties if necessary.

b. Delegate the essential job of coordinating all committees.

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c. Appoint the vice president as chairperson of an important committee and/or as administrative liaison.

d. Include the vice president in both budget and agenda planning.

To the recording secretary:

a. Require that all main motions and amendments proposed during a business meeting be immediately submitted in writing to the recording secretary.

b. Aid the secretary in executive committee discussions by summarizing the group's decisions so that they can be clearly recorded in the minutes.

To the corresponding secretary:

a. Submit all letters that must be typed well before the sending deadlines.

b. Write all correspondence, reports, etc., legibly, making it easy for the secretary to type them.

To the treasurer:

a. Work closely with this officer in preparing a workable year-long calendar and budget.

b. Depend on this officer to keep close watch on the money expenditures, and listen closely to the treasurer's monetary advice.

In addition to formal responsibilities, the president has a wide range of responsibilities to the officers as people and should constantly try to be aware of their needs and deal positively with them. This sometimes delicate task is crucial in maintaining a good working relationship among the officers.

Responsibilities to Council Committees

The president has responsibilities to an important group that includes the elected officers: *the executive committee.* Among the president's responsibilities to the *executive committee* are to:

a. Submit proposed agendas, to be further refined and approved through group discussion.

b. Act as the facilitator of a group discussion by summarizing, harmonizing, clarifying, etc.

c. Participate as a member with full powers to make motions, debate, and vote.

d. Call executive committee meetings at time intervals in accordance with the bylaws.

e. Praise committee members publicly for a good job on project or assignment.

The president's responsibilities to the *general assembly or business meeting* are to:

a. Serve as the chairperson, whenever possible.

b. Alternate the recognition of people for debate to allow different sides of an issue to be presented.

c. Make all final rulings on parliamentary questions, subject, of course, to appeal.

d. Prepare, with the help of the vice president and the executive committee, an agenda in advance of business meetings.

e. Explain the use of parliamentary procedure.

f. Protect individual's rights.

g. Report as accurately and clearly as possible the relevant activities in which the president has been involved since the last meeting.

Some of the president's responsibilities to the *standing and special committees* are to:

a. Serve as an ex-officio member of all such committees (except the nominating committee, if there is one).

b. Keep in touch with what each committee is doing and sit in on committee meetings when time allows.

c. Participate in the planned activities which the various committees offer.

d. Give public praise to a committee and its chairperson when the committee has done an unusually good job.

Responsibilities to the Students

The president's responsibilities extend beyond the students within the student council. A most important responsibility of a president is to serve as a spokesperson for the student body at large, since representing the students is the primary goal of the entire student council organization.

The president's responsibilities to a council's efforts to represent the students are to:

a. Voice student concerns to the faculty and administration, and attempt to develop programs and policies that will address these concerns.

b. Make sure students realize that student council meetings are open to anyone in the school, as is membership on council committees.

c. Work with students who want to speak in a council meeting, but who are confused by formal business procedures.

d. Lead the school delegation at regional, state, and national conventions and conferences.

e. Keep in touch with the various school clubs and organizations.

f. Organize, with the vice president, a calendar planning meeting for representa ives of all the school clubs, to be held at the beginning of the school year.

g. Seek student opinions by visiting homerooms and classes.

h. Take an active interest in school sports and recreational activities.

Responsibilities to Administrators and Teachers

In adequately representing the student body, the president comes into frequent contact with faculty and administrators. The president has to meet a number of responsibilities in order to maintain the student-educator dialog. The president should:

a. Keep faculty and administration informed on the significant developments of the student council.

b. Report without distortion to the council the comments and attitudes of the faculty members and administration.

c. Arrange direct dialogs between the professional educators and the students.

d. Work closely with the faculty and administration in designing and implementing ways to enhance the educational atmosphere of the school.

e. Point out problems in the school before they become crises.

Responsibilities to the Community

The relationship between the local community and the school varies, but all communities and community leaders take an active interest in the quality of the education being offered at the local schools. The council president may come in contact with many of these community leaders.

Some typical responsibilities to the community are to:

a. Attend executive committee meetings of the Parent Teacher Association or the Parent-Teacher-Student Association.

b. Speak at local civic organization meetings.

c. Invite civic leaders to speak at the school.

d. Work with local business concerns to prevent fund raising activities from interfering with local enterprises.

Responsibilities to Next Year's Council

Because the president's term in office will eventually end, he must constantly plan for the future. "What can I do to help those who come after me?" is an important question. Several responsibilities are to:

a. Maintain an accurate file of all correspondence the president receives or sends.

b. Keep a journal, indicating when planning for important annual functions should be started, what problems were encountered throughout the year, etc.

c. Keep a neat phone and address book of "people to know" in the educational system and the community.

d. Maintain an orderly, up-to-date folder for the permanent files on the duties of the president.

e. Work with the historian on the year's scrapbook.

Responsibilities to the Adviser

Nearly all of the president's duties will be made easier if he [illegible] strong working relationship with the student council adviser. The adviser provides a wealth of sound advice and practical knowledge. It is to the president's advantage to constantly work at maintaining an open communication channel with the adviser. To develop and maintain this channel, the president must:

a. Keep the adviser informed as to the functioning of the committees.

b. Inform the adviser of all letters that are sent on behalf of the council.

c. Inform the adviser of important comments that the principal or members of the faculty make.

d. Seek the adviser's opinions on matters of importance.

e. Realize the tremendous legal responsibility the adviser assumes by taking students to meetings away from school property and therefore act appropriately.

f. Recognize the amount of personal time and energy the adviser puts into the student council, and present the adviser with appropriate recognition throughout the year.

g. Respect the adviser as a person.

h. Talk with the adviser over the summer months about what needs to be done in the fall.

i. Realize that the adviser is legally responsible if anyone is injured on a council project, and therefore prevent students from engaging in activities that might lead to injury.

j. Keep the council room neat.

VICE PRESIDENT

The job of the vice president can be very rewarding, but it also can be quite tedious. The role of the vice president must be defined with the president. A good president is eager to help develop the vice presidential position into a creative one, but sometimes the president must be "reminded and asked."

The vice president should:

a. Assist in the preparation of proposed agendas.

b. Attend various meetings as the student council representative, either with or in place of the president.

c. Help the president organize the calendar planning committee, either chairing it or representing the student council when the president chairs it.

d. Assume some of the president's administrative load, such as coordinating the work of the committee chairpersons.

e. Be prepared to assume the duties of the president at any time.

As a member of both the general assembly and the executive committee, the responsibilities of the vice president are to:

a. Help to explain the opinions of the president.

b. Act as chairperson of a business meeting if the president is unable to attend.

c. Contribute ideas in general assembly and executive committee meetings.

d. Assume leadership of an important committee if asked to do so.

e. Design and use a monthly committee report form, to be filled out by all chairpersons.

f. Work "behind the scenes" before, during, and after business meetings to "iron out" differences between people or factions.

g. Act as a member of the school delegation to regional and state conventions.

h. Serve as chairman of the interclub council.

RECORDING SECRETARY

The duties of the recording secretary are much more comprehensive than simply taking minutes. Often, the duties of the recording secretary and corresponding secretary are combined into one position, requiring that the office-holder be especially talented. Here, however, the secretarial duties will be considered as two separate but closely related positions.

The responsibilities a recording secretary has *to the president* are to:

a. Keep an up-to-date record of the exact wording of the motions currently before the assembly.

b. Give the president feedback after meetings.

To the other members of the executive committee, the recording secretary has responsibilities to:

a. Take the minutes of the executive committee meetings.

b. Help the group reach a decision which can be recorded in a clear form.

c. Prepare the agenda for business meetings in the style that the assembly selects.

d. Contribute personal ideas and opinions whenever appropriate.

The responsibilities the recording secretary has *to the general assembly* are to:

a. Prepare and distribute the agenda.

b. Take attendance. This can be done a number of ways: call out the roll, assign seats, pass around a sign-in paper, or check off names as people enter.

c. Be able to read to the assembly the exact wording of each motion after it has been proposed.

d. Read the minutes of the previous meeting, or distribute copies of the last meeting and get them approved after everyone has silently read them.

e. Keep a topical index of the various minutes and the motions related to particular issues.

f. Record the minutes. The recording secretary may use a tape recorder or shorthand. Recording minutes by hand does not have to be complicated. According to *Robert's Rules*, one need only record

the wording of the motion as it existed when the assembly disposed of it. A council may prefer to keep a record of all the amendments attached to the main motion as it was first introduced.

g. Distribute the minutes. This can be done in a number of ways: reading important motions over the P.A. system; posting copies on bulletin boards; having representatives and interested people pick copies up from a central point; placing copies in teachers' mailboxes for use by both the teachers and the council representatives; or distributing them at the next meeting to the representatives.

h. Make certain that the administration and faculty receive copies of the minutes.

i. Keep a permanent record of minutes as an aid to future student councils.

j. Keep all stencils and ditto masters on file for future use.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

The corresponding and recording secretaries work closely together, one helping the other if work gets backed up. If the work becomes too heavy, a secretary may consider asking the school's business department for assistance.

The responsibilities of the corresponding secretary *to the president, executive committee, and the entire council* are to:

a. Type neatly all letters that are to be officially sent by the organization, making sure that no content changes are made without the writer's permission.

b. File carbon copies of the typed letters in an orderly way, making sure that the writer has a copy, and possibly the historian, if the content of the letter warrants it. The corresponding secretary should also keep a file of all letters typed for personal reference.

c. Send thank-you notes, birthday cards to teachers and administrators, etc.

d. Produce a student council directory.

e. Maintain a file of important addresses.

f. Alert the organization's members to important correspondence.

g. Help to keep the files clean, and store pencils and dittos so they may be reused.

h. Establish a policy with the recording secretary concerning the lending of files.

i. Develop a friendly relationship with the school office's secretaries and custodians. These people have helpful skills and can also obtain the little odds and ends that the council office needs.

TREASURER

The treasurer keeps accurate records of all financial transactions, and periodically reports a summary of the monetary transactions to the executive committee and business meetings.

The treasurer predicts how money will be used in the future and makes concrete suggestions for saving money and increasing efficiency. To do the job correctly, a treasurer must keep track of all expenditures and add the appropriate money transactions to the books. The treasurer should be *the* person concerned with regulating the flow of money, especially when many people want to spend it.

Among the responsibilities the treasurer has *to the executive committee* are to:

a. Understand the policies the school has in regard to the use of student finances and explain them at the first executive committee meeting.

b. Work with the adviser, president, vice president, and appropriate committee chairpersons in the formulation of yearly, half-yearly, quarterly, and individual activity budgets. (See Appendix A: Forms Student Councils Use.)

c. Make recommendations as to whether the cost of a proposed project can be justified.

d. Authorize payment vouchers, sign checks, review purchase orders, and maintain the organization's books. (See Appendix A: Forms Student Councils Use.)

e. Revise established budgets when necessary.

f. Interpret the financial situation in easily understandable terms.

The responsibilities the treasurer has *to the general assembly* are to:

a. Make and interpret monthly financial reports to the business meeting.

b. Make financial reports and interpretations on each project.

c. Deposit money quickly to prevent its accidental loss.

d. Present the "economic perspective" in debate.

e. Establish guidelines for fund-raising activities that are consistent with the school's educational objectives.

f. Prepare cost-benefit analyses of various endeavors (i.e., will the expense of time, money, effort, etc., be worthwhile in terms of its benefits of money, improved image, etc.)

g. Keep aware of local business activities and make sure that council fund-raising activities do not conflict with them.

h. Understand the tax-exempt status of the school, and use it appropriately to save the council money.

i. Research the legality of certain kinds of fund-raisers (sale of used furniture or chances and lotteries).

j. Check that all contracts entered into are signed by school officials.

THE GRASS ROOTS— REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The representatives embody the council's efforts to be the student voice. Indeed, it is from their obligation to represent the students that the representatives get their name. These are the people who must develop that crucial dialog between students and student council. And these are the ones who ultimately determine much of the direction the council takes during the year.

Some responsibilities of the representatives *to the students* are to:

a. Report council actions to the constituent group in an accurate, informative, and interesting way—on a regular basis.

b. Present, as fairly as possible, students' ideas and motions to the council, if the students don't do so directly themselves.

c. Attend all student council functions.

d. Try to maintain, when voting on issues, a consciousness of what is best for the students rather than "what is best for me."

e. Make special efforts to inform the students of upcoming events that might interest them.

f. Take informal polls on how students feel about certain topics.

g. Welcome new students to the classroom.

h. Encourage non-members of student council to work on committees.

i. Help arrange for a constituent to attend council meetings.

The representatives have responsibilities *to each other.* Among them are to:

a. Report to another representative's constituents if that representative is absent.

b. Help people on another project if a lot of work has to be done.

c. Fulfill one's own obligations on a particular project so that other people need not assume the burden.

d. Be active in meetings.

e. Research the content and wording of motions before making them, thereby helping to save valuable time in meetings.

Typical responsibilities of the representatives *to the adviser* are to:

a. Be conscientious about responsibilities so that the adviser does not have to spend time on little unfinished details.

b. Treat the adviser with respect and concern.

c. Keep the student council room neat.

d. Report any minor problems to the adviser before they develop into major ones.

The student council has responsibilities *to the faculty and administration.* Some are to:

a. Respect the importance of being a student council member by not abusing privileges.

b. Respect the legal responsibilities of the faculty and administration by not being careless during away-from-school activities, after school, etc.

c. Seek the opinions of teachers on various issues, and personally invite them to meetings.

d. Convey the attitudes of the faculty and administration to the students honestly.

e. Ask faculty members to serve as chaperones at council events.

As with many of the other offices, though, the responsibilities of representatives cannot be described completely in a list. In order to do the job well, representatives add creativity, enthusiasm, and devotion to any list of their duties.

APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

Responsibilities of the historian. The historian is in charge of developing a pictorial and written record of the highlights of the year. This job can't be done in a few nights; it must be an all-year effort. This position can be incorporated into an officer's duties, or it can be held by a person whose sole responsibility is this assignment.

Responsibilities of the parliamentarian. The parliamentarian's role varies somewhat, depending on whether the parliamentarian is already a voting member of the council or is appointed from outside of

the council membership. If already a voting member of the council, the parliamentarian has full rights to debate and is a consultant to the president about parliamentary procedure. Voting parliamentarians can even challenge the president's ruling by appealing, as any other member can.

However, parliamentarians who have been appointed from outside the council membership can offer procedural opinions *only* when asked to do so by the chairperson and are subject to the limitations of debate and voting which are applied to all non-member speakers.

In addition to offering procedural rulings, the parliamentarian usually chairs the bylaws revision committee, if the need to have one arises.

Responsibilities of the chaplain. The chaplain's duties are usually limited to providing inspirational messages to a meeting before business begins. To ensure that these messages reach the widest range of people, it is wise to keep in mind that inspirational messages should not offend the individual religious beliefs of any members. This responsibility can easily be handled by another officer.

Responsibilities of the administrative liaison. The administration must be kept informed about the ideas, issues, and activities of the student council. The administrative liaison's responsibilities include maintaining regular communication with the principal. The principal's reactions, too, must be accurately conveyed to the student council, and especially to the president. The administrative liaison has the critical job of ensuring that both parties receive accurate information. Opinions improperly conveyed can cause serious damage.

Some councils have this important job done by an elected officer. However, no matter which officer helps maintain the communication between students and administration, the president should still arrange to have regularly scheduled meetings with the principal. The administrative liaison should not be viewed as the only contact with the administration, but instead should be seen as one of many such contacts.

Responsibilities of the public relations specialist. Some councils are involved in so many activities that they find it necessary to have one person maintain a continuous flow of information to local papers, television and radio, and other schools. Responsibilities are to:

a. Release information periodically to the media about the council activities.

b. Check releases for proper grammar.

c. Work with the adviser on all materials being sent to organizations outside the school.

d. Compile lists of addresses of the news media and their requirements for announcing school events.

e. Obtain principal's approval before releasing information to the media.

The public relations specialist and the corresponding secretary should determine who is responsible for typing and mailing the information.

Responsibilities of the committee chairpersons. These members must be "wizards" at organizing people to implement projects. But, they must make sure that the feelings of the committee members are respected and dealt with in positive, beneficial ways. Chairpersons must represent the committee members on the executive committee. Typical responsibilities of chairpersons are to:

a. Help members express their ideas in committee meetings.

b. Help the group to focus on one idea at a time.

c. Help to resolve disagreements among committee members.

d. Research information for the committee.

e. Work with committee members in assigning individual responsibility for certain aspects of a project.

f. Keep constant check on progress toward meeting deadlines, and make sure the members know the deadlines.

g. Work with the vice president to prepare monthly committee reports.

h. Give input to the executive committee, especially about the attitudes and ideas of their committee members.

i. Work with the treasurer to design ways the committee can cut costs.

j. Check with the bylaws and the executive committee concerning committees' authority.

A set of six pamphlets describing the specific duties of council officers is available from NASC. The set, called *Profiles of Student Council Officers*, describes the responsibilities of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, committee chairman, and representative. The complete set can be ordered from NASSP Publication Sales, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091.

4 Planning and Evaluating Projects

Student councils either coordinate projects of other school organizations or manage their own projects. In their efforts to represent all students, councils provide a variety of opportunities for students to express themselves. One of the most important services is to sponsor student projects.*

Through projects, students can expand social relationships with others in school, explore areas of personal and educational interests, and become part of the school or community.

Ideally, projects offer these benefits to both organizers and participants. In essence, each project is an indication of how well the council measures the interests or needs of the student body.

PROJECTS: HOW TO GET STARTED

To keep student interest and avoid scheduling problems, councils should plan their projects systematically. One process that the executive committee (com sed of officers plus committee representatives) can follow is to:

1. List the general areas that the council wishes to focus upon. These might include community service, school service, citizenship training, career development, fund-raising, social functions, and school spirit.

2. Conduct brainstorming sessions on each area and propose several activities that could be offered.

3. Review the evaluations of last year's projects.

*For an extensive list of student council projects, see Appendix B.

4. Compare this year's proposed list with last year's list and make adjustments.

5. Weigh any suggestions for program expansion or cutbacks in specific areas, making sure that the treasurer is actively involved.

6. Submit recommendations about program expansion or cuts to the appropriate committees via the committee chairperson.

Preparing Effective Questionnaires

The council may want to develop and administer a questionnaire to get students' opinions on its project ideas. It may also use questionnaires to help evaluate projects. Here are some guidelines for preparing effective questionnaires:

1. *Determine the length of the questionnaire.* Generally, shorter questionnaires have a better chance of being completed and returned than longer questionnaires.

2. *Determine the types of questions to ask.* There are four possibilities:

A. *Essay.* "What is your opinion of the student council dance held last Saturday night, January 10? Please comment on the music, ticket cost, decorations, and anything else you wish to include."

B. *Short Answer.* "Please nominate three juniors that you believe meet the criteria for the annual Student Leadership Award."

C. *Multiple Choice.* "Please indicate which type of student assembly you like best. Check only *one.*"

( ) guest speaker
( ) film
( ) musical performance
( ) panel discussion or debate
( ) no preference

D. *Scaled Preference.* If the school cafeteria were open for breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. every day and served donuts, juice, and milk:

Check one only.

( ) I would buy breakfast *every day.*
( ) I would buy breakfast *at least three times a week.*
( ) I would buy breakfast *once a week.*
( ) I would buy breakfast *occasionally.*
( ) I would *seldom or never* buy breakfast.

3. *Determine the purpose of the questions.* Do the questions really measure what they're intended to measure? For example, if

the council wants to find out *how many students* would attend a pep rally at 7:00 p.m. next Friday, the following question would *not* give them an accurate answer.

"Do you like the idea of having a pep rally?"

Ask instead:

"If the student council sponsored a pep rally at 7:00 p.m. next Friday at the football field, would you come?"

yes_____ no_____

4. *Determine who will receive the questionnaire.* There are many choices, depending upon the purpose of the questions.

a. all students in the school
b. all students in one class
c. random sample
d. selected sample (20 seniors, 20 juniors, etc.)

5. *Determine when the questionnaire should be distributed.* Questionnaires distributed to students on Friday afternoon, to be returned the following Tuesday, might get lost during the weekend. Consider circumstances that will affect the results of the questionnaire—a drop in school spirit, an unsuccessful council proposal to the administration in the recent past, a very successful (or very unsuccessful) football season, the time of day and year, etc.

6. *Determine a logical order for the questions.* Short, "easy" questions often make a good beginning. An essay question might be placed at the end.

7. *Determine whether the questionnaire can be easily tabulated.* Do you have time to read a large number of essay responses? Are the multiple choice questions easy to tabulate?

Planning Projects at the Committee Level

Before a committee jumps into a project, it should prepare a strategy. Planning should be a logical process that increases the chances for the committee's success.

1. *Establish goals.* Ask the committee, "Exactly what do we want to accomplish?" When writing out project goals, do not use vague words such as "many," "some," "a lot," etc. Be specific. Not "We hope a lot of students attend the dance"; but "Our goal is to have 50 percent of the students attend the dance."

2. *Examine present position.* By comparing where the committee or council is now to where it wants to be in the future, one gets an accurate picture of what the project should accomplish.

3. *Solicit ideas for projects.* At this creative stage of planning, ideas are "brainstormed" (see Chapter 6). Quantity is emphasized, rather than quality. Encourage committee members to suggest their craziest ideas!

4. *Establish guidelines for selecting a project.* In this stage, the committee lists all the factors it must consider before a project can be selected, including financial limitations, available facilities, planning time, number of people willing to be involved, season of the year, etc.

5. *Select the project.* Keeping in mind the goals as well as the guidelines, choose the project that seems most likely to meet your objectives. Be realistic—if the council needs to raise $1,000, selling packages of chewing gum for 10 cents each is probably not realistic. If the council wants a foreign exchange student to enroll in September, starting the proceedings in May will doom the project to failure.

GETTING PROJECTS OFF THE GROUND

Translating an idea into an exciting and stimulating event is a difficult task that requires planning, caution, and foresight. At many points along the way, something can go wrong that may hinder the success of the effort. However, if a committee proceeds carefully, it can usually work out any problems it encounters.

These suggestions will help get the project off to a good start.

1. Make sure that the project has received the proper approval and full support of the council.

2. Clear the project with the principal before any planning or organizing begins.

3. Determine exactly what the council wants the committee to do. The committee should work from written instructions whenever possible.

4. Establish project goals.

5. Work with the treasurer in designing a project budget and ways to cut costs.

6. Prepare a time line and responsibility chart for members (see Appendix A). Make sure everyone understands his assignment.

7. Publicize the project through all appropriate channels.

8. Secure necessary physical facilities.

9. Obtain adult chaperones if necessary.

10. Submit periodic reports to the student council officer in charge of projects.

11. Develop a list of phone numbers and addresses to help future committees.

12. Implement the project! If more help is needed, ask for it.

13. Clean up after project.

14. Pay bills promptly and submit all records of financial activities to the council treasurer.

15. File an official evaluation report. State how well the objective was met.

16. File a complete project report in the student council records. As you think of ways to "do it better next time" write them down immediately for future reference.

Some Reminders

1. A project should be an extension of the goals and purposes of the council. Projects should not be held simply to prove that the council is busy.

2. The project should have educational or social value.

3. When the project involves selling, members should be alert to local and state laws that may regulate the sales.

4. In most instances, projects should involve a large number of either participants or planners.

5. Projects should encourage initiative, creativity, responsibility, and cooperation.

6. Evaluations should include remarks by those who planned the project and by those who participated or received the benefits of the project.

7. A project failure should serve as a valuable learning experience.

EVALUATING PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Written evaluations should be prepared for all major projects. In addition to a final written report, evaluation remarks should be noted throughout the planning and progress of the project. Both planners and participants' opinions should be included.

The following suggestions may be helpful:

1. When evaluating during the planning stages, focus on group cooperation, time pressure, clarity of purpose, specific problems encountered, etc.

2. Determine whether you want objective or subjective data for the evaluation. *Objective data* includes attendance figures; number of

hours expended; costs; comparisons to past years' figures, etc. *Subjective data* are opinions and feelings about the project. Both kinds of data can be valuable.

3. Decide how to gather the data: questionnaires, interviews, "grapevine," etc.

4. File typewritten evaluations with the council secretary.

5. Determine the interval of evaluation. Would an evaluation by the representatives after three months concerning the effectiveness of a leadership training day be more effective than an evaluation immediately following the day's program? Will evaluating the program immediately and then again in three months provide useful information? (Keep in mind that an immediate evaluation will provide different information from one taken at a later date.)

6. Evaluate the project, not the personalities. Also, be careful of subjective value statements (e.g., "The decorations were shabby."), unless that evaluation serves a definite purpose.

7. Remember that a random sample can reduce evaluation time when compared to asking for *everyone's* opinions.

8. State whether or not the project could be successfully repeated.

5 Committees

Much of the student council's work is done in small groups and committees. Councils have numerous committees functioning at one time, each concentrating its energies on certain duties.

While committees allow a council to deal with many problems at once, they can also contribute to a rather substantial communications problem if they don't inform other committees of what they're doing. To prevent a communication breakdown, most councils appoint one person, often the vice president, to coordinate all committee activities. Coordination can become quite involved, because council committees can be engaged in more than one project at the same time.

Committees usually fall into one of two categories. *Standing committees* are defined in the bylaws as those committees appointed at the beginning of the year that serve throughout the entire year. *Special committees* (often called ad hoc committees) are appointed by the general assembly to work on a particular assignment and automatically dissolve when the assignment is completed. The student council *executive committee* has a different purpose and structure from the standing and special committees.

COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

Every committee must have a clearly defined reason for being, and every committee member must understand what that reason is. Otherwise, confusion will exist over what can legitimately be undertaken. It is the responsibility of the committee chairperson to make sure that the committee's purposes, powers, and limits are clearly understood and strictly followed.

Special committees are assigned their specific responsibilities by the general assembly. Those responsibilities should be practical, reasonable, and clearly stated by the general assembly. If, however, the

committee members are unclear about what their assignments are, the chairperson should immediately seek clarification from the vice president.

Most student council committees will have one or more of the following general purposes:

- to plan activities
- to investigate issues and report the findings
- to do work of a specific nature (sell tickets, clean up after a dance, etc.)
- to represent the council at official functions.

What Committees Are Needed?

Unfortunately, many councils appoint committees first and then decide what they are to do. Instead, it is advisable to agree upon what needs to be done, and then establish committees to do it.

At the beginning of the year, this planning can be done by the newly elected officers, but committees should be periodically reviewed by the executive committee during the year. The bylaws provide for flexibility in committees' undertakings, but they too should be checked to ensure that a committee is acting within its limits.

The needs of the school can be determined in a number of ways, including:

- opinion polls
- feedback from representatives
- letters to the school newspapers
- school tradition
- past activity attendance records
- financial records
- examination of the curriculum
- surveys taken by the guidance office
- general lunchroom conversation
- suggestion boxes

After using various methods to determine student needs, the committee titles and responsibilities can be determined.

Committee Size

The size of a committee depends upon its assignment. Obviously, a committee decorating a hall for a dance will probably have more

members than a committee that's investigating the cost of bands. In some situations, it is better to have too many people on a committee than too few, as is the case with a committee assigned the job of cleaning up after a school rally.

Some general rules about committee size are:

- The ideal size for groups attempting to discuss and develop ideas is between five and seven people. With fewer than five people, there is not the necessary variety of perspectives; with more than seven people, members may become frustrated because of the number of others who also want to speak.
- Members should have enough work to keep busy. People who show up to work on an assignment, but find nothing to do, may be reluctant to become involved again.
- Members should not be overworked—the quality of their project diminishes, and they may not want to help in the future.

Appointing Special (Ad Hoc) Committees

Special committees come into existence when a motion made in a business meeting refers a specific matter to a committee. The general assembly will frequently appoint special committees to work on particular projects. Some councils call them ad hoc committees. Once these special committees achieve their definite purposes, they are disbanded.

The motion to create a special committee states exactly what the committee is to do, and includes:

- a statement of who is to serve on the committee or the number of people needed and how they are to be appointed
- a brief description of the committee's assignment
- the date or time by which the committee is to report back to the assembly.

If the motion names the committee, the first person named is the chairperson. If only a chairperson is named, that person probably will name the members.

Example 1: Naming the members

"Madam Chairperson, I move to appoint a committee of Linda, Sandy, John, and Jeremy to investigate the cost and quality of new typewriters, and report its findings and recommendations back to the general assembly in two weeks."

Example 2: Members to be appointed

"Mr. Chairperson, I move to refer this main motion to a committee of five people, to be appointed by the president, to investigate the possible legal problems in students leaving school property for

lunch, and have it report to the general assembly not later than three meetings from now."

Membership on Committees

When any student in the school is eligible to join a council committee, the council increases its communication with the student body. However, with the special committees established by the general assembly, it is often practical to include only council members.

If councils want student body members to serve on various committees, they must undertake active publicity and recruitment campaigns. The old excuse that "Even though we announced our policy about anyone joining standing committees over the public address system, no one signed up" is not necessarily a sign of student disinterest. It is more likely an indication of inadequate publicity.

The president is an ex-officio member of all committees, entitled to all the privileges of membership without the requirement of obligatory attendance. The president should not be counted in determining a committee's quorum.

Meeting Time for Committees

Because of their assignments, many committees must meet during non-school hours. Therefore, students who cannot arrive early or remain after school are excluded from participation. Realizing this dilemma, some schools schedule activity periods during the school day for school clubs, organizations, and committees. If committee meetings are scheduled during school time, it is important that they in no way interfere with academic pursuits.

Committee meetings should be called well in advance, allowing members to make the necessary arrangements to attend. A majority of the committee members can call a meeting, as can the chairperson, president, or adviser.

Committee Chairpersons

Chairpersons are charged with seeing that the purposes of committees are met. Chairpersons are recognized by the council as the official leaders of committees, but during discussions leadership may (and should) change. (See the section on Leadership in Small Groups, page 45.)

Committee chairpersons have a number of formal responsibilities, which include:

- calling committee meetings and notifying members
- appointing a committee secretary
- filing a monthly committee projects report

- making any necessary reports to the general assembly or executive committee
- participating in committee discussions and helping others to do so
- serving on the executive committee (if a chairperson of a standing committee)
- working with members to map out on paper the general timetable and activities of the committee for an extended period of time.

Chairpersons for *standing committees* are usually appointed by the president, working in conjunction with the other officers and the adviser. Chairpersons for *special committees* are appointed by either the general assembly or the president.

Committee Reports

One kind of committee report is a monthly projects report, submitted in writing to the vice president, covering the actions of a committee over the previous 30 days. (See Appendix A for a sample reporting form.) These reports not only keep the vice president and, in turn, the executive committee informed about the committee's actions, but they are also valuable records for the years to come.

A second kind of committee report is made directly to the general assembly and contains either recommendations for the assembly to act upon or a list of facts that the assembly should have on record.

The assembly handles a factual report differently from a report with recommendations. With a report containing only facts, such as one offered by the social committee on the results of the last dance, the general assembly need not vote on adopting it, since the facts cannot be disputed.

However, if a report contains recommendations, these recommendations should be introduced, discussed, and voted upon by the assembly during the standing or special committee reports period of the meeting.

The following form of a detailed committee report taken from *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised,* can be varied to meet the needs of each situation:

- a description of the manner in which the committee undertook the assignment
- the facts discovered or the information gathered
- the conclusions, as derived from the facts and information
- motions, resolutions, and recommendations developed.

The committee chairperson usually reads the committee report to the assembly, with the recommendations being stated last. The committee chairperson then moves to adopt the committee's recommendations, if any.

The recommendations are discussed and disposed of while still under the appropriate section of "committee reports" in the order of business on the agenda. If the committee offers several recommendations, there need be only one motion for adoption. However, each recommendation can be individually considered and voted on if the assembly, by a majority vote, decides to "divide the question." (See Section 27 of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.*)

Implementing Committee Assignments

Some assignments that committees receive are in the form of direct instructions from the general assembly. Other assignments are general in their instructions, as is the case with standing committees whose only directions may be a few sketchy sentences in the bylaws.

Nonetheless, once a committee decides upon a project, it must know how to implement it. This stage of implementation is critical, since the world's best idea is useless unless it can be acted upon.

GROUP DYNAMICS IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Some groups and committees spend all of their energy arguing or doing everything *except* the group's assigned responsibilities. To prevent this from happening, it is necessary to understand some of the problems groups face and how to solve them.

Tasks and Maintenance

The actions and comments of group members affect how the group handles its jobs or performs its tasks (*task behavior*), or, how the group members try to *maintain* a friendly working atmosphere (*maintenance behavior*). Frequently, the actions of a member affect both task and maintenance issues of the group at the same time.

Task behaviors and comments are important to the group, because they are intended to solve the assigned problems, finish the job, meet the task, etc. Anyone who has worked in groups or committees probably realizes that not all actions are helpful to the group finishing its job. Obviously people can perform helpful, positive task actions or harmful, negative ones.

Some helpful, positive task behaviors are:

- summarizing ideas, expanding on what has already been said
- suggesting goals, giving direction, getting the group going along a new path
- getting the group to present more information or ideas
- giving information or ideas
- polling and questioning to see if everyone agrees.

Some task behaviors that have negative effects on attaining group goals are:

- starting critical discussion before a large number of ideas have been collected.
- trying to discuss a topic without having agreed on goals for the discussion
- getting sidetracked from the subject
- stressing the negative ("We can't do it"; "The idea isn't any good"; "It's pointless to try that"; etc.).

Maintenance Behaviors

While task behaviors are going on, the group is also trying to maintain a friendly feeling among the members. These *maintenance behaviors* are important because people prefer to work in a comfortable emotional atmosphere.

The following kinds of behavior deal positively with maintenance issues:

- releasing tension by joking, laughing, etc.
- patching up differences between people—harmonizing
- agreeing, either by words or gestures
- getting people to contribute to the discussion (This kind of behavior is frequently referred to as "gate-keeping," since the gate is kept open for more people to enter into the conversation.)
- compromising and admitting a mistake
- testing to see if the group is satisfied with the procedure and guidelines for the discussion.

Just as some task behavior is harmful to getting the job done, some kind of maintenance behaviors are harmful to the group's efforts to maintain a friendly working atmosphere. Some kinds of negative behaviors are:

- being aggressive, giving "snappy" answers, etc.
- cutting people off; interrupting someone who is speaking
- ignoring someone's question
- goofing off.

LEADERSHIP IN SMALL GROUPS

Even if a group or committee's work is clearly defined, there's a variable that members will have to deal with: leadership style varies with the leader's personality.

A leader who makes and directs all group decisions is called *autocratic.* This style might be effective in getting a task done; but in the long run the group members will probably develop negative task and maintenance behaviors, especially towards the leader, which will damage the ability of the group to function. For instance, the members may feel that their ideas are not respected or dealt with fairly. Also they may not feel enough commitment to the decisions of the autocratic leader to devote themselves to trying to make those decisions work.

A second kind of leader is one who gives the group little or no direction; this style is called *laissez-faire* leadership. Sometimes this leader really doesn't care how the job gets done, or may feel that group members will know how to proceed without direction. In this style, the committee or group may have difficulty in understanding exactly what its job or task as a group is, as well as not knowing what position and authority the leader should have within the group.

A third approach to small group leadership is the *democratic style,* which involves a widespread sharing of ideas with considerable discussion among group members. The leader may suggest ideas but basically follows the decisions of the group.

Because there is so much emphasis on the members participating, the concept of leadership becomes rather complicated. No one person can hope to notice and meet all of the task and maintenance needs that arise in a rapidly moving discussion. Usually, different people will see and respond to different needs as the discussion continues.

The person or persons who see and respond to those needs are *leaders in that particular situation.* A person appointed or elected to fill the position of "group chairperson" or "committee leader" should expect leadership help to come from other members in situations they deal with best.

In fact, with a democratic group that meets several times, it is usually the case that one person handles many of the task needs (*task leader*) while another person handles a large portion of the maintenance issues (*maintenance leader*). It seems that if a person is trying to keep the group focused on getting the job done (task), it is too much to expect him/her to also be fully aware of people's feelings (maintenance). Obviously, each kind of leader needs the help of the other.

In short, a democratic group can expect to have one person who specializes in getting the task done, another person who tries to maintain a friendly working atmosphere, and several other members who at various times help out both kinds of leaders.

6 Parliamentary Procedure and Its Alternatives

The casual observer may believe that most student council work is done in business meetings. Those who work with student councils know that a large share of the work is done by committees and by the officers. Nonetheless, there *is* important work accomplished during business meetings.

Business meetings are held for two basic reasons: to have a *limited amount of discussion* on an issue or proposed course of action, and then to decide an official stand on it by using a *formal voting procedure.*

The rules of business meetings are usually referred to as "parliamentary procedure," since their historical origins are in procedural rules developed in the British Parliament. A thorough understanding of the rules can be a great aid to councils; but applying them haphazardly will result in disastrous meetings.

For most councils, business meetings are not the best place to develop creative ideas or to work out compromises. These jobs are usually handled in committees.

Parliamentary Wording vs. Parliamentary Logic

Parliamentary *logic* is simple. It consists of the principles on which all parliamentary procedures are based. Although it is simple, parliamentary logic is perhaps the most important key to the "mysteries" of parliamentary procedure.

The *wording* (phraseology) of parliamentary procedure is a bit more difficult to remember than is the parliamentary logic. Some people react negatively to parliamentary language, saying that it is unnecessary and cumbersome. No doubt, it does get in the way at times. However, there is a good reason why parliamentary procedure has its own set of words and phrases.

Present-day parliamentary procedure is designed for use all over the United States in thousands of different kinds of business meetings. By insisting on a precise and definite wording, parliamentary procedure enables any person who knows its rules to function effectively in a variety of meetings. A person who learns parliamentary procedure in New Mexico should be able to use it in a meeting in New Hampshire. The emphasis on precise wording, therefore, is simply an effort to develop standardization in business meeting procedure.

For council members who do not have sufficient training in parliamentary usage, the wording is confusing. Precise wording provides the most thorough citizenship training, but it is not necessarily a requirement of a good student council. What *is* a requirement of a good council, however, is that it strictly follow the *logic behind parliamentary procedure*, which is nothing more than common courtesy and common sense.

Principles of Parliamentary Logic

A student council should:

- Consider only one idea at a time.
- Encourage individuals to introduce ideas, but decide on those ideas only as a group.
- Decide how to spend its own time in meetings.
- Be ruled by the majority, but also protect the minority.
- Realize that some individual rights cannot be violated by the group for any reason.
- Refuse to take a stand if it might be harmful later.
- Have the option to change its mind.

Common Parliamentary Terms*

Adjourn—To close the meeting (may not interrupt a vote).
Amend—A proposal for a change or modification in a main motion.
Appeal decision of chair—To appeal to the assembly to override a ruling made by the chair.

*The list of Common Parliamentary Terms and the Quick-Reference Parliamentary Procedure Chart are from the book *Communication and Leadership*, by John Gray, published in 1973 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va.

Committee of the whole—To consider a motion informally (using group discussion methods).

Division of the house—To call for an announcement of the number voting for and against a motion (usually called for after a voice vote).

Fix time of next meeting—To fix time for reassembling.

Lay on table—To postpone consideration of a question temporarily (may be brought up in same session or some later session).

Limit debate—To restrict the time available for debate on a motion.

Main motion for general business—A proposal for action concerning the general business of the group.

Make a special order of business—To set a specific time for the exclusive consideration of a particular question.

Object to consideration—To object to the consideration of a motion considered irrelevant or objectionable (must be made before debate begins).

Orders of the day—A request to conform to the order of business.

Parliamentary inquiry—To seek advice from the chair concerning parliamentary procedure.

Postpone indefinitely—To dispose of a motion without voting upon it.

Postpone to a certain time—To delay until a specified time any action upon a pending question.

Previous question—To terminate discussion on a debatable motion by bringing it to immediate vote.

Question of order—To correct an error in parliamentary procedure.

Question of privilege—A request for the chairman to deal with an emergency situation (disorders, offensive remarks, discomfort, etc.).

Recess—To temporarily disband for a specific purpose (vote, lunch, etc.).

Reconsider—To give the group an opportunity to consider again an action already taken (special rules apply here).

Refer to committee—To delay action or investigate further a question by referring it to a committee.

Request for information—To request information concerning the pending business.

Rescind—To cancel an action taken at a previous meeting.

Take from table or to resume consideration—To revive a motion previously laid on the table, or temporarily put aside.

Withdraw a motion—To prevent action on a motion when the maker of the motion has changed his mind (to be made only by maker of the motion).

IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

	Second Needed	Amendable	Debatable	Vote Required	Interrupt Speaker
Fix time of next meeting	yes	yes	no	1/2	no
Adjourn	yes	no	no	1/2	no
Recess	yes	yes	no	1/2	no
Question of privilege	no	no	no	ch.	yes
Lay on the table	yes	no	no	1/2	no
Previous question	yes	no	no	2/3	no
Limit debate	yes	yes	no	2/3	no
Postpone to a certain time	yes	yes	yes	1/2	no
Refer to a committee	yes	yes	yes	1/2	no
Committee of the whole	yes	yes	yes	1/2	no
Amend	yes	yes	*	1/2	no
Postpone indefinitely	yes	no	yes	1/2	no

*—Debatable when motion to which it applies is debatable.

ch.—The chairman can make the decision, but it is a majority vote if appealed.

NO ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

	Second Needed	Amendable	Debatable	Vote Required	Interrupt Speaker
Main motion	yes	yes	yes	1/2	no
Take from table	yes	no	no	1/2	no
Reconsider	yes	no	*	1/2	yes
Rescind	yes	yes	yes	2/3	no
Make special order of business	yes	yes	yes	2/3	no
Appeal from decision of chair	yes	no	*	1/2	yes
Suspend the rules	yes	no	no	2/3	no
Object to consideration	no	no	no	ch.	yes
Parliamentary inquiry	no	no	no	ch.	yes
Withdraw a motion	no	no	no	1/2	no
Division	no	no	no	1/2	yes
Point of order	no	no	no	ch.	yes
Request for information	no	no	no	1/2	no

*—Debatable when motion to which it applies is debatable.

ch.—The chairman can make the decision, but it is a majority vote if appealed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON

In a business meeting, the chairperson's responsibility is to keep the meeting orderly, understandable, and democratic. This requires not only a good knowledge of parliamentary procedure, but also practical skill in conducting meetings.

The following suggestions will help the chairperson to be a more effective leader:

1. Realize that each chairperson has his own style. Some go "by the book" and are very formal; others conduct meetings in a relaxed manner. Both styles can work; it depends upon the nature of the chairperson, the particular issues, and the mood of the meeting. Each chairperson should realize the strength of his style and work to develop it.

2. Protect individuals' rights.

3. Call motions or actions that are out of order. For example, "The motion is out of order because . . . "; not "*You* are out of order because. . . ."

4. When ruling a motion or action out of order, try to offer a suggestion to help the person accomplish his proposal.

5. Require that all main motions and complicated amendments immediately be given in writing to the recording secretary.

6. Always state clearly what is before the assembly.

7. Rule a motion "out of order" if it clearly attempts to hinder the assembly's ability to discuss business.

8. Use a gavel—it is great for getting people quiet.

9. If the meeting is noisy, never try to shout over it. The confusion will just increase.

10. Explain what is happening to those people who are "lost" in the discussion.

11. Refrain from debate with individuals.

12. Take all 2/3 votes by counting raised hands, not by voice.

13. Follow a precise format when voting.

    a. Announce that debate has ended.

    b. Re-read the motion.

    c. Say "All those in favor of the motion, please say (aye) or (yes)." Pause. Then, "Those opposed, please say (nay) or (no)."

    d. State which side of the vote won, and by what margin. (Example: "The no's won by at least a majority vote.")

e. State whether the motion was passed or defeated.

f. Inform the assembly what motion (if any) comes next. (example: "Is there any more new business?").

14. Call on people of differing opinions throughout debate.

15. Call on a person a second time for debate *only* after everyone who wants to has spoken a first time.

16. Use a microphone if necessary.

17. Arrange a signal with a friend in the meeting who can be "cued" to move to end debate if discussion starts going in circles.

18. Follow an agenda.

19. Keep a readable chart on parliamentary procedure handy for quick reference.

Do Student Councils Need Parliamentary Procedure?

Parliamentary procedure is an effective decision-making method for people who understand it, but is complicated and bothersome for those who don't.

Some councils are small and friendly enough that they do not need the formal wording and rules of parliamentary procedure . However, all councils need a respect for those common sense and common courtesy principles upon which parliamentary procedure is based (see page 48). While it is possible to follow those general principles without using a complicated system of rules and motions, councils pass by a very valuable area of formal citizenship training by neglecting parliamentary procedure. In a heated controversy, it may be an effective tool for cooling tempers.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Councils and other groups that choose not to follow the strict form of parliamentary procedure use some form of *interactional discussion.* Interactional discussion in small groups involves direct, easy interchange; members speak up without waiting for recognition by the leader, and each communicator must be aware of every other person and his reactions.

It is easy to see why the situation is more difficult when there are 40 persons interacting rather than five. To be aware of every other member in a large group is difficult; each communicator tends to consider his listeners a mass of "others," an audience. He is less likely to feel that he is talking directly to a few individuals. Yet this kind of direct interaction is desirable in many large group situations.

Interactional discussion has many variations. Among them are: informational conferences, round table discussions, panel discussions, symposiums, buzz groups, cooperative investigation, brainstorming, operating under house rules, lecture-presentation, and open forums.

Informational Conferences

A true informational conference is a specifically scheduled meeting, without audience, at which all participants seek to share their personal knowledge or experience with the others present. The goal is the sharing of knowledge that may make both the group and the individuals composing it more efficient in their work.

The informational conference differs from the problem-solving conference in that its goal is to produce information only, not to isolate, examine, and solve a problem. It may, however, enlarge group knowledge about a problem as a result of sharing information.

Round Table Discussion

"Round table" refers to a closed discussion with a rather informal organization. It is used by groups that are trying to achieve a specific goal or solve a problem. Members meet, with or without a chairman, and start talking. Their discussion may be structured, with an introduction and a conclusion, or may be hit-or-miss. There are no auditors or observers.

Panel Discussion

A panel of from three to eight participants is selected to carry on a discussion in front of, and partially for the benefit of, an audience. Their method is a sort of structured conversation. Usually, though not necessarily, there is a designated chairman. The audience may be allowed to ask questions or enter into the discussion while it is under way or after the panel has finished.

Symposium

A number of people, often experts in some aspect of the subject under consideration, are each invited to make short speeches. When all have spoken, participants may ask questions or make statements in regard to what another has said; and the audience may be invited to join in.

Buzz Groups

After a general presentation or discussion (or even prior to a program), the large group is divided into units of six or eight persons.

Each of these buzz groups is asked to consider a specific question. All of the small groups may be answering the same question, or each may have a different question. Each group selects a leader and/or recorder.

At the end of the allotted period, the leader of each buzz group presents the group's report to the whole assembly. In this way, every individual takes an active role in deliberation, even though his contribution is filtered through the reporter of his buzz unit. Member satisfaction is increased by this process, and there is usually a noticeable increase in interaction within the large meeting following a buzz session.

The success of this method depends largely on the quality of questions assigned to each small unit. The time allowed for the discussion questions in the buzz unit should be as short as possible to create a sense of urgency and importance.

Cooperative Investigations

The procedure for this type of group is more formal, as its purpose is more sharply focused. It is designed for situations in which group members have little information on the topic, and no expert is available to lecture on what they need to know. There are usually eight steps to this "do it yourself" exercise.

1. The group meets in advance to elect a leader and to divide the subject into a number of subtopics.

2. So that members can know what each has accomplished, the leader calls one or more advance meetings to review assignments and make final plans.

3. At the beginning of the discussion meeting, the leader analyzes and defines the problem.

4. Each member then presents his information in a brief report. The report contains only information, no argument.

5. When the reports are finished, the leader calls for any additional information.

6. The leader concludes the first portion of the meeting by summarizing the fresh pool of information, and then opens the second half by inviting discussion in light of the facts presented.

7. Finally, if the nature of the problem permits, ways and means for putting an agreed-upon solution into operation are discussed.

8. At the conclusion of the discussion, the leader may want to summarize the points of agreement, identify any problems that still

need attention, and evaluate the process by which the group reached its understanding.

Brainstorming

The unique purpose of brainstorming is to encourage the creation and expression of original ideas for the solution of a difficult problem. Since the emphasis is on quantity and not quality, the ideas are not evaluated during the brainstorming session. By taking the pressure of judgment off of the group, it is hoped that imaginations will be stirred to move outside well-worn pathways and look for previously unimagined possibilities.

The following ground rules should be strictly enforced in brainstorming:

1. Every person is encouraged to offer as many ideas as come to his mind.

2. Ideas which "hitchhike" on those already offered by someone else are encouraged.

3. *No* criticism or any kind of adverse reaction to any idea offered is permitted.

4. *No* evaluations are made at this meeting.

House Rules

Using house rules is an informal way to structure a meeting. House rules are usually composed of from five to 20 rules of courtesy and procedure which are determined by the group for its own use. This method provides a simple, flexible framework for groups whose members want an alternative to strict parliamentary procedure.

House rules usually cover the following areas:

- How are decisions to be reached? Who makes them?
- How are ideas to be presented? When? How many?
- How are ideas to be changed?
- How is information to be obtained?

Lecture-Presentation

Lectures and presentations have the main purpose of information sharing. Information is given, but there should be *no judgment* made upon the material.

Information is provided by qualified speakers well versed in the lecture topic. The speakers give their prepared remarks to the audience with little interaction from the rest of the group. After the lecture, an open forum on the topic is usually provided.

Open Forum

An open forum provides the chance for each group member to express an opinion on a topic. The right to speak is available to all members of the group; prepared or impromptu comments may be freely expressed. This information-sharing method lends itself to discussion of material from a movie, speech, or presentation. Order must be maintained and members are recognized by the leader in order to ensure that the forum process continues.

A PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

Sometimes it is important to get wide popular support for an idea or project. For instance, a community service project probably won't be successful unless it has the backing of the entire membership. To ensure members' enthusiasm and interest, the council should get many members' ideas about what the project should be and commitments from the members who want to participate.

Councils can start by having members discuss the possibilities for projects or solutions in small groups where people can speak freely and frequently. One method for dividing a large group into small groups for discussion is as follows:

1. Present the problem to the entire group. Make sure everyone understands the problem and that the wording is clear.

2. Divide into from five to nine small groups. Instruct each group to come up with three possible solutions, ideas, or projects.

3. Have each small group select a spokesperson to present and explain the group's ideas. Seat the spokespersons of all the groups in a circle, with the other representatives surrounding them in a large circle.

4. Each spokesperson selects one or two ideas, solutions, or projects that were brought up in the small groups for discussion. The outer circle of representatives should remain silent. No one in the inner circle should ask questions of those on the outside.

5. After 10 minutes of discussion, spokespersons return to their small groups. Representatives tell them about any important points they missed, how they felt about the other groups' ideas, and anything else that may contribute to a decision.

6. Spokespersons then return to the circle to work out a final decision, keeping in mind the opinions of their small groups.

7 Constitution and Bylaws

CONSTITUTION*

A student council constitution is a written document that sets forth the fundamental laws or principles under which the council operates and is organized. The constitution generally:

- states the name of the organization
- outlines the general purposes of the organization
- lists the membership qualifications and election procedures
- discusses meetings in general
- outlines adoption and amendment procedures
- states the source of parliamentary authority and states who may veto proposals or actions of the organization.

Student council constitutions should be written in general terms that can be understood by everyone. Sentences and articles should be brief, simple, and clear. Only those items that will help the council to accomplish its purposes should be included.

*_Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised_ states: "Under the preferred practice for ordinary societies today, the constitution and bylaws—once usually separate—are now combined in a single instrument, referred to... as the *bylaws* (although in some organizations called the *constitution*, or—even though only one document—the *constitution and bylaws*)."

Because most student councils operate under both a constitution and a set of bylaws, this book maintains a distinction between the two. However, a model bylaws that reflects *Robert's* use of the term is included in Appendix C. Chapter XVIII, Section 55, of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* includes a discussion of bylaws.

Most student council constitutions contain the kinds of articles given below.

Article I: Name of the Organization

"The name of this organization is . . . . . "

Article II: General Purposes, Duties, and Responsibilities of the Student Council

General aims and objectives of the student council and general areas of responsibility should be included in this article.

Article III: Membership

This section should cover criteria for membership in the student council voting assembly; removal from a council seat or office; and filling vacancies in the voting assembly.

Article IV: Officers and Representatives

This article names the officers of the student council, describes the nomination and election procedures, outlines members' and officers' general duties and responsibilities, and lists standing committees and the provisions for the appointment of any special committees.

Article V: Meetings

The article on meetings should state how often the student council meetings will be held; determine the process for calling special meetings; and establish a quorum for conducting business.

Article VI: Election of Members

The entire procedure for the student elections is outlined here. The time of the election and voting eligibility and general procedures should be included.

Article VII: Committees

The names of all standing or permanent committees are listed here along with the methods of appointment, term of office, and committee duties and responsibilities. The provisions for the appointment of special or temporary committees are also listed in the article.

Article VIII: Parliamentary Authority

This article should be one sentence in length, specifying the particular book of parliamentary authority used.

Article IX: Adoption and Amendment Procedures

This article lists the detailed procedures to be followed for adopting and revising the constitution and bylaws.

BYLAWS

Bylaws are designed to supplement the constitution. Where the constitution deals with general purposes and outlines the council's organization and administration, the bylaws usually contain more specific information.

Some student councils handle the details of their operations according to general principles instead of writing them down as bylaws. In general, the larger and the more formal an organization is, the greater is the need for bylaws. Each council must determine whether it needs bylaws and what should be included in them.

Changing the Constitution and Bylaws

Once the constitution and bylaws have been accepted by a vote of the student body and approved by the administration, they become the basic law of the organization. If this principle is adhered to, it is rarely necessary to change the constitution; but bylaws—because they are specific—will need to be changed.

Every constitution should include a description of the procedures for amending the articles and bylaws. It is good practice to have the entire school, faculty as well as students, review proposed changes before they are put to a vote or adopted.

Occasionally, both the constitution and the bylaws may have to be revised or completely rewritten. The revision is usually drafted by a specially-appointed constitutional or bylaws revision committee.

After a change has been proposed and a draft has been prepared, the student body should be informed and given copies so that they can review and discuss the issues before they come to a final vote. Proposed amendments or revisions usually require a two-thirds vote of the student body for adoption.

Some councils are criticized for spending too much time on amending their constitutions and bylaws instead of dealing with student concerns. However, there are times when an outdated constitution or set of bylaws is a real hindrance to the council. Some good reasons for amending a constitution or bylaws are that:

- statements no longer suit the school situation
- articles and bylaws are arranged so poorly that essential information is hard to find (this situation sometimes occurs when an

old document has been added to and amended over a period of years)

- they contain elements that have caused long-standing disagreement
- they violate individual rights
- they prevent the council from adapting to change.

Appendix A

Forms Used by Student Councils

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A STUDENT COUNCIL MEETING

I. Call to order

The chairman calls the meeting to order.

II. Invocation

The invocation is optional, depending upon the formality of the organization.

III. Roll call

Roll call can be time consuming, especially if each person's name is called. Other ways to take roll include: 1) having assigned seats; 2) passing around a sheet of paper to sign; 3) getting signed in or out by someone at the door. The recording secretary can take attendance, but it may be more advantageous to give this assignment to someone else.

IV. Approval of the minutes of last meeting

Approval of the minutes can take a long time if they are read aloud. Time is saved by having the minutes from the last session passed around at the beginning of the meeting, so people can read them silently. The chairman should ask, "Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes?" If there are none, "They stand approved" (or "stand approved as corrected").

V. Officers' reports

A. *President*—The president spoke to the principal yesterday about the motion passed last week concerning students sitting in on faculty meetings. The principal said that she had no objections but that a copy of the motion should be sent to all teachers so that they can discuss the idea at their next meeting. The president then asked the corresponding secretary to run off copies of the motion and put them in all the teachers' mailboxes. He will do it tomorrow.

B. *Vice president*—The vice president was requested by the president to attend a meeting of the county school student rights committee. At the meeting,

inequities among schools concerning disciplinary procedures were discussed, including differences in handling class attendance and distribution of political literature. The committee finally agreed that it should try to standardize as many disciplinary rulings on a county-wide basis as possible and investigate those procedures which seem unnecessarily severe. The vice president recommends that the student council establish a committee to discover the disciplinary procedures used by our administration, and send these to the county student rights committee.

C. *Recording secretary*—All monthly committee reports must be turned in by 3:00 p.m. tomorrow.

D. *Corresponding secretary*—Copies of the motion concerning students attending faculty meetings will be put in teachers' mailboxes tomorrow, as requested by the president.

E. *Treasurer*

The treasurer's report should be as brief and uncomplicated as possible. Questions about it should be allowed, as for all officer or committee reports. Detailed ledgers should be kept for examination on the request of any member.

Balance on hand_____ (as of date of last report)		$1,000.00
Receipts		
March dance	350.00	
Activity tickets	250.00	
Total receipts		600.00
	Total	$1,600.00
Disbursements		
Office supplies	1.00	
Publicity	8.00	
Food and refreshments	45.00	
Miscellaneous expenses	325.00	
Total disbursements		-379.00
Balance on hand_____ (today's date)		$1,221.00

Month's profits $221.00

Officers' reports should be as brief as possible. To save time and ensure accuracy, they can be given in writing with a verbal explanation, if necessary.

If an officer makes a recommendation, its form and content should resemble a committee recommendation. (See VII.) After the report is given, the chairman

should restate the recommendation and ask for a second. It then becomes an original main motion.

VI. Standing Committee Reports

Social Committee—The March dance made $320.00 for the student council. A detailed financial report has been submitted to the treasurer. The committee met on_____(date) and evaluated the dance; the report is in the file. The dance lasted from 8:00-11:30 p.m. on_____(date). Admission price was $1.00 per couple and we sold 280 tickets.

Standing committees include those committees which serve all year and are usually mentioned in the constitution. In the standing committee report given in this sample agenda, no motion for adoption is necessary because only facts are presented.

VII. Special Committee Reports

The committee appointed last meeting to investigate the possibilities of adopting an orphan in a foreign country contacted Save the Children, Inc., and obtained information. For $200 a year, we can adopt an orphan in Ecuador; the committee recommends that the student council adopt an orphan in Ecuador for $200 through Save the Children, Inc.

Special committees are appointed for a limited time and a specific purpose, and their existence terminates with their final report to the assembly. In the case of the special committee report in this sample agenda, a motion for its adoption is necessary because it makes a recommendation. The motion to adopt is an incidental main motion.

A detailed committee report that offers a recommendation for the assembly should include:

- *a description of the way in which the committee undertook its task*
- *the information gathered and/or the facts discovered*
- *the findings or conclusions derived from the facts or information*
- *resolutions or recommendations.*

VIII. Special Orders

Special orders become a specific category in a business meeting only when business is left over from the last session. They are then taken up in the order that they were to have been considered in the last session.

IX. General Orders/Old Business

A. Moved to set up a committee to investigate the legality of the ban on student smoking in designated areas.

B. Moved to request that the PTA allow students to sit in and participate in executive committee meetings.

General orders/old business includes:

- *A question that was pending at the last session when it adjourned*
- *Any unfinished business that did not come up at the last session*

- *Any general orders from the last session that were not reached*
- *Matters made general orders by a majority vote.*

A motion to take from the table is in order at this time if no motion is pending.

X. New Business

Motions that introduce new items of business or motions to take from the table are in order at this time.

XI. Announcements

The special projects committee will meet today at 3:00 p.m. in the student council room.

Announcements must be made before the meeting is adjourned; motions are out of order at this time. The chairman may make important announcements at any time during the meeting.

XII. Adjournment

Adjournment ends not only the meeting but also the session. The next time the assembly convenes it must start from the beginning of the agenda.

Note: *Suspension of rules.* The order of business listed in the agenda can be changed by two/thirds vote to suspend the order of business. A motion to suspend the rules may be stated this way: "I move that the order of business be suspended by considering_____(name of specific issue) at this time."

Individual Responsibility Chart

This chart is for use by committee chairpersons to help them keep track of committee members' progress on their assignments. The chart also provides a convenient resource for preparing the monthly committee report.

Committee member	Assignment	Deadline	Persons and places to contact	Progress report date	Sign here when completed
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					

Monthly Committee Projects Report

Date Filed_____ Committee Name_____

Members_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Project undertaken:_____

1. Brief description of project

_____

_____

_____

2. Materials used_____

3. People or places contacted:

Name *Address or Phone Number* *Response*

4. Problems encountered and solutions (if any)

5. Recommendations for future

   a.

   b.

   c.

6. General comments:

Projected Monthly Budget

Month of_____, 19____

Revenues		
Activity ticket sales	$220.00	
Dance ticket sales	400.00	
Total revenue	$620.00	$620.00
Expenses		
Office supplies	$ 5.00	
Publicity	5.00	
Food and refreshments	55.00	
Decorations	0.00	
Miscellaneous expenses	325.00	
Total expenses	$390.00	-390.00
Projected profit		$230.00

Projected Activity Budget

Activity_____ Date of activity_____
(name of activity)

Revenues		
Ticket sales	$400.00	
Total revenues		$400.00
Expenses		
Publicity	5.00	
Food and refreshments	55.00	
Miscellaneous expenses	325.00	
Total expenses	$385.00	-385.00
Projected profit		$ 15.00

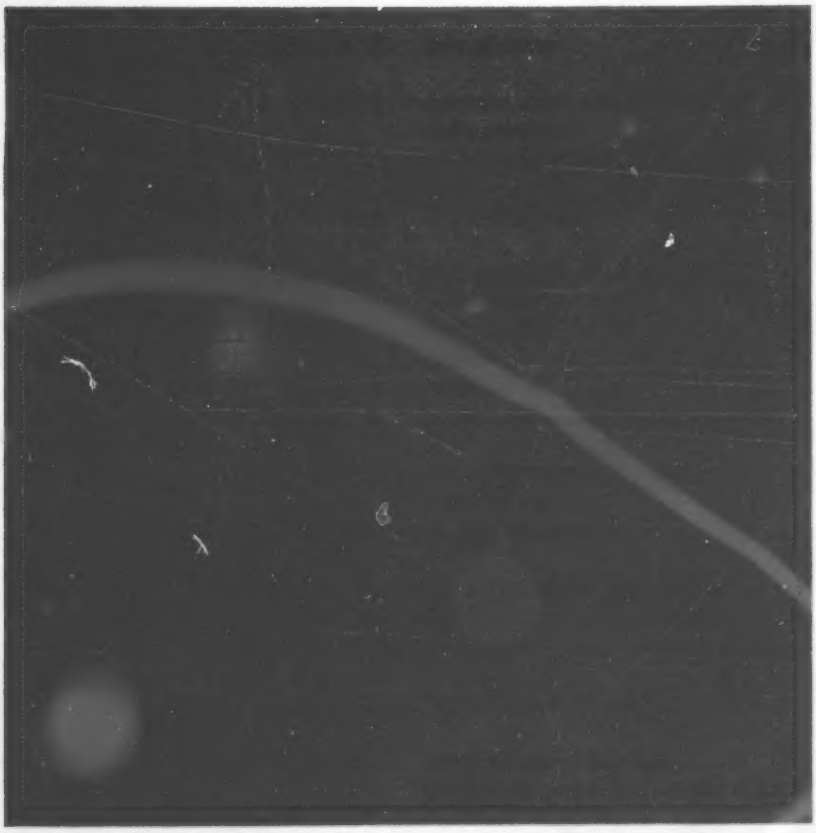
Activity Expense Report

Name of activity_____ Date held_____

Date of filing this report_____

Revenues		
Dance ticket sales	$350.00	
Total revenue		$350.00
Expenses		
Publicity	8.00	
Printing tickets	25.00	
Band	300.00	
Food and refreshments	45.00	
Total expenses	$378.00	-378.00
		-$28.00

Loss: $28.00



Other forms student councils use are:

- advance request for approval of school activity
- advance request for use of school facilities
- application for club charter

Financial forms in common use are:

- student activity budget
- ledgers
- disbursement vouchers to transmit money
- deposit statement
- internal accounting forms
- purchase order (must be signed by principal)
- receiving slip
- deposit slip
- monthly budget statement

Since these forms and the way they are used vary among school systems and schools, sample forms are not included in this book. However, most student councils use them as part of their routine scheduling and financial operations.

Appendix B

Student Council Projects

The following list of projects is arranged in alphabetical order by category. For information on how to select, plan, and evaluate projects, see Chapter 4.

Alumni

Organize an alumni association and maintain alumni records

Arrange hospitality for alumni at homecoming

Send school bulletins to alumni

Plant a tree on campus to honor a distinguished alumnus

Assemblies

Plan a panel discussion

Present an operetta, concert, one-act play, skit, or tableau

Arrange "how-to" assemblies

Present a talent show

Present inspirational speakers

Set up a town meeting

Present the work of certain departments in the school

Showcase the activities of other school clubs

Hold exchange assemblies with other schools

Show movies, filmstrips, slides, travelogues

Prepare a presentation on the history of the school

Present a "who's who" assembly to introduce club officers

Hold a student council meeting on the stage

Set up an induction service for newly elected officers

Make a student survey of what is wanted in assemblies

Devise a system to evaluate assemblies

Assume full responsibility for the entire assembly program

Set up a speech assembly for candidates

Conduct an assembly on rights and responsibilities

Celebrate holidays with programs and assemblies

Athletics

Interscholastic Sports

Write pep notes to players before every game

Organize a pep club

Hold a recognition banquet for all players

Have homeroom or class competition for attendance at games

Sell popcorn at games

Have all-school competition for new cheers

Hold school color days before important games

Promote attendance at girls' sports events

Cheerleaders

Conduct election for cheerleaders

Send cheerleaders to a training workshop

Hold a local workshop for cheerleaders

Set up criteria for selecting cheerleaders

Organize a special cheering section for games

Purchase megaphones and costumes for cheerleaders

Homecoming

Assume responsibility for all homecoming events: parade, floats, banquet, dance, decorations, alumni, coronation of queen, hospitality, reception, publicity

Intramurals

Plan an all-school field day

Plan tournaments so that everyone can participate in something

Sponsor an intramural athletic program among classes and clubs

Student Attitudes

Organize a good sportsmanship campaign

Organize a school spirit campaign

Poll students on how they feel toward the school and why they feel that way

Have student sound-offs

Get permission for officers to conduct discussions during classes

Try to eliminate vandalism

Poll student opinion on political and social issues

Hold forums and panel discussions on issues that interest students

Offer an "unsung hero" award to a person who contributes a lot to the school atmosphere but receives little credit

Awards, Honors, and Scholarships

Provide awards for scholarship or service

Hold an awards assembly

Design awards for graduating seniors

Have each department develop criteria for awards in its field

Meet with local business people and community leaders to establish a fund for scholarships

Set up permanent plaque to honor outstanding students

Start a school hall of fame

Compile information on available college scholarships

Invite a college to send a financial aid officer to an assembly for interested seniors

Institute an honor roll

Establish a chapter of the National Honor Society or National Junior Honor Society*

Board of Education Relations

Invite the board to a student/board dinner

Send board members monthly information bulletins about school activities

Consider student representation on the board

Publicize school board decisions that affect students

Invite board members to school activities

Include discussions with board members in leadership training workshops

Invite board members to attend school with students

Make presentations before the board

Serve on various curriculum design and school policy committees

Visit local voters to encourage them to vote in school board elections

Career Development

Arrange for a representative from a vocational school to speak with interested students

Arrange for representatives from various vocations to speak with students

Design a Junior Achievement program

*For information on how to establish a National Honor Society or Junior Honor Society chapter, write to National Honor Society, NASSP, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091.

Work to establish work-study and career studies classes in school

Charter career interest clubs

Work with the industrial arts department in designing school projects

Sponsor an arts and crafts fair

Sponsor writing and poetry contests

Children's Service

Volunteer at day care centers, nursery schools, or orphanages

Hold a "story time" at local libraries

Participate in Toys For Tots campaign

Collect, repair, and distribute toys

Make toys in shop classes

Set up a babysitting service at the school for parents attending school functions

Citizenship

Hold mock national political conventions

Secure voting machines for school elections

Work to establish a leadership class with school credit

Serve refreshments at polling locations during general elections

Supervise all school elections

Participate in a youth-in-government day

Participate in a youth careers day

Hold a United Nations week

Attend local government meetings

Invite local government and civic officials to speak

Work with local community service clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.) in citizenship award programs

Community Cooperation

Offer refreshments at the Red Cross Bloodmobile

Work on community pollution detection and clean-up

Participate in training classes for rumor control centers, hot lines, etc.

Work at animal shelters

Meet with community leaders on plans for community development

Work on Halloween UNICEF drives

Develop a know-your-community campaign

Assist in approved community campaigns

Schedule speakers from community health organizations, such as Lung Association, Cancer Society, et

Plant trees, shrubs, and flowers in the community

Cooperate with civic clubs for community improvement

Work to establish local and state parks

Collect books, magazines, etc. for orphanages, nursing homes, hospitals

Set up and direct a community youth center

Present programs on student council to local clubs and organizations

Assist in developing a local historical museum

Visit elderly persons in their homes

Send representatives of student council to meetings of local service clubs

Serve on city, county, or state youth commissions

Present a radio or television show about the work of the council

Represent student interests in debates on laws that affect young people

Sponsor family night at school for parents

Invite local or state educators to participate in a panel discussion

Send regular press releases about school news to local papers

Collect items for charitable organizations

Study local history and present an assembly program or publish a booklet

Assist in summer recreation programs

Join Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA)

Campaign for a school bond issue

Help students develop alternative transportation to the automobile

Participate in walk-a-thons and bike-a-thons

Contests

Sponsor:

school contests to select school flag, emblem, seal, mascot, school ring, song, nickname

competition between classes in various charity drives

contests during holidays for the most creative lobby or hall decorations

school spirit contests

"alternative sports day" with hula-hoops, frisbee contests, tug of war, pillow fights, peanut pushings, etc.

Educational Service

Design and implement alternative education days

Work for a accredited leadership class

Sponsor a college information day

Sponsor a vocational education information day

Offer activities to enhance the curriculum

Offer programs to serve student interests that fall outside traditional courses

Establish a tutoring service

Offer after-school classes in auto maintenance

Prepare a list of community lectures and other events

Hold a student-faculty dinner

Publicize a list of community lectures

Sponsor a science fair

Environment-Ecology

Provide adequate and secure bicycle racks

Recycle paper and items from the cafeteria

Sponsor earth day and earth week projects and community clean-up days

Develop a long-range, school-wide environmental program

Establish a student council committee on the environment

Sponsor a science fair on environmental issues

Present national and international ecology issues in assemblies

Submit environmental resolutions to the state legislature

Fund-Raising

Sponsor rummage sales

Coordinate various "zany" contests—banana eating, head standing, pie eating, sit-ups, etc.

Design a country and folk music festival

Sell a book of student literature and music

Set up a bicycle repair shop

Coordinate the fund-raising activities of all school groups

Help musical organizations make records and sell them

Sponsor a crafts show

Operate a school supply store or snack bar

Make a wishing well for one school project

Sponsor an all-school activities night

Make and sell an activity calendar

Organize and sell a cookbook

Run concession stand at games

Have a lost-and-found auction

Collect old papers, magazines, rags for recycling or industrial use

Open a recycling center

Sponsor a popular movie

Have a basketball game between the faculty and the staff of a local radio station

Receive percentage of sales from activity tickets

Help other school organizations with their projects and receive a percentage of earnings

Hold a festival, fair, jamboree, carnival, etc.

Stage a talent night

Sponsor roller skating or ice skating parties

Sell:

light bulbs
football programs, pep pins
pennants
brooms
candles
car stickers, decals with school emblem
book covers
candy
baked goods
popcorn
student directories
handicraft articles
school supplies
Christmas cards, wreaths, trees, holly, and mistletoe
magazines

Guidance

Sponsor a career day

Maintain a library of career information

List college catalogs available in library

Hold a college night (or day)

Publish a list of community counseling and youth services

Work to establish a hotline

Distribute drug information

Campaign for teacher confidentiality laws

Health, Safety

Sponsor a drug abuse program, panel discussion, week-long seminar, or workshop

Set up a telephone "hotline" for students

Publish a fact sheet on drugs and their effects to be distributed to the student body

Send members of the school drug committee to local elementary schools to talk with students about drugs

Arrange for a mobile chest x-ray unit to come to your school; assist its staff

Organize a school safety council

Work with local police to improve poorly marked roads and other traffic hazards

Paint strips on parking lots

Propose a course in driver education

Hold an assembly on the population explosion and its implications

Sponsor a guest speaker or current film on crucial personal issues facing young adults

Establish programs with the American Lung Association

Set up a "smokers' seminar" for students and teachers who want to quit smoking

Assist the cafeteria in preparing nutritional menus for students

Provide vending machines containing snacks of high nutritional quality

Put treads on steps

Put salt on slippery sidewalks

Holiday Projects

Buy a live Christmas tree and replant it after use

Schedule speakers from other cultures to make presentations on their country's holiday celebrations

Sponsor an International Day with the home economics department

Sponsor an Easter egg hunt for children

Distribute holiday baskets

Give a party for teachers

Bring canned goods and food to school for distribution to the needy

Sing carols through halls just before vacation

Set up a system for distributing holiday cards through the school

Exchange holiday cards with other councils

Help set up a special holiday assembly

Have an all-school holiday dinner

Decorate area store windows

Give a holiday party for senior citizens

Arrange a community caroling party

In-School Relations

Relations with Students

Conduct open council meetings

Ask non-members to serve on student council committees

Report student council news to the student body at a regular time

Poll student attitudes

Establish a student grievance board

Have council officers visit classes to discuss topics with students

Sponsor student forums

Relations with Faculty

Sponsor teacher appreciation days

Sponsor student-faculty athletic events

Send birthday cards to teachers

Invite teachers to breakfast in the cafeteria

Invite teachers to council meetings

Establish teacher-student discussion groups

Interview teachers for articles in school paper

Sponsor a student "teach day"

Give copies of student council minutes to all teachers

Conduct a teacher baby picture contest

Invite students and faculty to a potluck supper

Welcome new teachers in fall

Arrange for students to help teachers a few days before school opens

Relations with Administration

Establish a regular schedule of student-administration dialogs

Provide copies of minutes after each meeting

Establish a student advisory committee

Ask for volunteers to monitor and clean up areas frequented by students

Send special invitations to the administrators' spouses concerning activities

International Relations

Participate in the United Nation's International Walk for Development

Cooperate with such international organizations as CARE, UNICEF, Junior Red Cross, and American Field Service

Finance a foreign student studying at your high school for a year

Raise funds to send a student to another country for study

Invite foreign students and other foreign members of the community to come to school and talk about their countries

Make a tape of typical school activities, discussions, etc. and send it to a school in another country

Organize a pen pal club

Hold an assembly on the work of the United Nations

Sponsor an orphan in a foreign country

Invite students who have traveled abroad during the summer to make informal talks and show slides during a noon hour assembly

Keep a file and post information on a bulletin board about special travel rates abroad for students

Observe United Nations Week

Have international food days, and dinners

Invite speakers from other countries

Raise money to build a school in a developing nation

Establish an international club to research life in other countries

Inter-School Relations

Help an elementary or junior high school organize a student council

Organize and/or participate in regional student council meetings

Develop a student exchange program with a school in another city

Plan an exchange day or week between local schools

Form an area student council

Collect supplies for an under-equipped school

Mail newspapers and council newsletters to other schools

Share rides when going to regional or state meetings

Establish joint efforts in campaigning for political issues that are relevant to students

Leadership Training

Sponsor a weekly leadership training session open to all students

Participate in local, state, and national leadership training workshops

Conduct a dinner in the fall for all school and club officers

Conduct a school leadership workshop for council and club officers during the first week of school

Organize an inter-club council

Study proposed clubs, grant charters, and review all clubs' activities at the end of each school year

Designate certain council meetings for special activities, such as brainstorming, rap sessions, buzz sessions, and role playing

Work to establish a leadership class for credit

Establish youth-in-government and youth-in-business days

Design a training program for newly elected representatives

Orientation of New Students

Hold orientation week

Urge all organizations to post welcome signs for new students

Visit feeder schools and answer questions

Assign older students as special friends or guides

Make a movie of a typical week at school and show it to new students

Present a skit showing what the school has to offer

Serve as big brothers and big sisters

Have a breakfast for new students

Hold a coke party to get acquainted

Give each new student a school handbook

Ask each club to send a representative to a meeting of new students

Arrange for new students to visit classes

Have a special assembly for newcomers

Give newcomers a welcome kit

Award each new student a certificate of membership in the student body

Wear special badges and invite new students to come to council members with their problems

Have a welcoming party for new students

Hold a formal induction ceremony to welcome new students

Have upperclassmen visit new homerooms or classes for a week and explain various aspects of the school

Parent Relationships

Encourage the formation of Parent-Teacher-Student-Associations (PTSAs)

Encourage students to join PTSA s and attend meetings

Conduct panel discussions for parents

Ask parents to chaperone activities

Send thank-you notes to parents who help on projects

Invite PTSA members to council meetings

Attend regional and state PTSA meetings

Send occasional newsletters to parents, counselors, teachers

Publications

Publish:

Monthly activities calendar

Booklet suggesting homeroom activities

Yearbook

Newspaper

News bulletin

Student directory

School handbook

Column in school paper

Column in local paper

Election rules

Student body constitution

Voters' guide

Map of school

Student council meeting minutes

Pictures and biographies of candidates for school offices

Directory of student council members

Council newsletter

Summary of important laws relating to students

Student rights and responsibilities documents

School Services

Serve as receptionist in school lobby or guidance office

Conduct tours of building

Staff an information booth for visitors

Organize hall guides or monitors

Organize an alumni association

Maintain a complete file of all alumni

Arrange hospitality for alumni at homecoming

Send school bulletins to alumni

Renovate janitors' room

Place shelves near gym and cafeteria for books

Establish rules for cafeteria

Help plan menus for lunchroom

Encourage wider use of cafeteria

Give numbered cards to those in lunch line to ensure proper place in line

Maintain hall bulletin boards

Clean trophy case; polish trophies

Obtain good reproductions of paintings and hang them in halls

Keep school scrapbook

Usher at school events

Help celebrate school's birthday

Make victory flag for school

Raise and lower school flag each day

Maintain suggestion box

Check building for necessary repairs

Inspect and repair lockers

Paint halls

Improve school library

Assist school librarians

Offer assistance in order to keep library open all summer

Assist in nurse's office

Plant trees, shrubs, flowers on school campus

Have sign made to identify school; place on front lawn

Place exit signs in proper places in school

Clean up campus

Maintain check on operation of public phones

Paint lavatories

Plant trees and shrubbery

Provide parking lot spaces for students

Provide bicycle racks

Help teams, band, cheerleaders raise money for uniforms

Establish a lecture series

Social Affairs

Tea for homeroom mothers and/or teachers
Season's party (Valentine, St. Patrick's, May Day, etc.)
Skating party (roller and/or ice)
Yearbook signing party
All homecoming activities
Dress-up day breakfast
Valentine post office
Teachers coffee party
Farewell party for graduates
Senior (junior) prom
All-school picnic
All-school banquet
Progressive dinner
Community sing
Get-acquainted mixer
Senior breakfast
Buffet supper
Rock concerts
New Year's party
Pot-luck supper
Pizza party
Bowling party
Box supper
Coronation ball
Square dances
Chili supper
Hayride
Bobsled ride
Penny party
Hike
Mid-winter ball
Game party
Dancing classes
Teen canteen
Stunt night
Hawaiian luau
All-activities night
Country-blue grass festivals

Students Rights and Responsibilities

Write a student bill of rights

Revise the school constitution or bylaws

Issue to all students a statement of goals and ideals approved by the council

Establish a student problem hearing board

Seek representation on the school's curriculum committee

Establish a student rights and responsibilities committee

Initiate an honor system

Draw up an honor code

Set up a plan of student supervision of study halls

Keep students abreast of current court decisions involving student rights and responsibilities through a newspaper column, fact sheet, etc.

Present student viewpoints to various adult groups involved with the educational process

Serve on regional curriculum development committees

Serve on policy development committees

Attend meetings of the local and state boards of education

Work to get a student on the board of education

Hold a rights and responsibilities day

Invite speakers on rights and responsibilities

Poll students on how well they know their rights and responsibilities

Student Services

Hold an exhibit by art students (or any other department)

Maintain a tape recording and lending service

Sponsor a school savings program

Run a school bank

Conduct student employment service

Maintain lost-and-found room

Suggest plan for exemptions from exams

Assist in fire drills

Set up a system to record extracurricular credit points

Maintain a card file of information on all activities

Secure petitions from students for various school or community improvements

Promote a plan for student insurance

Eliminate freshman hazing

Conduct a workshop for school hosts

Obtain discount cards for students at local theaters, bowling lanes, etc.

Make a survey of extracurricular participation by students

Coordinate the school activities program

Issue identification cards for all students

Provide music for students during noon hour

Run intramural program during noon hour

Maintain advertising file for use of all clubs

Organize a drive to secure a memorial to a student

Send presents, cards, flowers, etc. to students who are ill or injured

Establish loan fund for small emergencies

Serve as student proctors

Serve as tutors to students

Organize and publicize information on youth counseling services, drugs, the draft, voter registration, student rights and responsibilities

Investigate and publicize student travel discounts

Operate a student employment bureau

Trips

Write a manual to help student groups planning out-of-town trips

Assist school organizations with plans for their trips

Help finance some trips

Write to other schools to get ideas on how to improve a trip

Have a follow-up on each trip to see how future trips can be improved

Arrange for inter-school exchanges

Schedule trips to governmental agencies

Arrange transportation for away games and for local or state student council meetings

Attend the NASC/NASAA National Conference

Appendix C

Model Bylaws*

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization is the Student Council of_____
_____.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the student council shall be to:

1. Provide a democratic form in which students can address those school-related issues which affect their lives;

2. Maintain a continuous communication channel from students to both faculty and administration, as well as among the students within the school;

3. Offer a year-long program of social functions and community involvement projects for students; and

4. Train students in the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship, using the school environment as the primary training ground.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

Section 1. One gains membership in the student council upon the completion of the nomination procedure as established by the student council, and is elected under the procedures prescribed by these bylaws. However, one can be elected to a position in the student council (without fulfilling the nomination procedure) by write-in votes.

Section 2. Any member will be removed if (s)he misses three (3) meetings without presenting reasonable excuses to the adviser. Any disagreement between the member and the adviser over the reasonableness of an excuse will be decided by the assembly.

*This document reflects the use of the general term "bylaws" for a document that combines both a constitution and bylaws. For a discussion of this modern use of the term "bylaws," see *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised,* Chapter XVIII, Section 55.

Section 3. Upon the creation of a vacancy in the position of homeroom representative, the homeroom will elect a new representative within two (2) weeks. Upon the creation of a vacancy in the position of president, the vice president shall assume all duties and responsibilities immediately. If both offices are vacated simultaneously, the student council shall open up nominations for both offices, first accepting nominations for the office of president from among its present membership and holding an election within the student council, and then following a similar process to fill the position of vice president. All vacancies in elected offices shall be filled within one (1) week by accepting nominations from the student council members to decide upon the person to fill the vacancy. Any vacancies created by a member's changing positions through this procedure will be filled as stated in these bylaws.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1. The elected officers shall be *president*, *vice president*, *secretary*, and *treasurer*. The appointed officers shall be selected by the president, subject to a majority vote of the executive committee.

Section 2. Each homeroom shall be represented by one elected representative.

Section 3. All elected officers and representatives must be selected according to the election rules established in these bylaws.

ARTICLE V: DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1. The president shall: _____.

Section 2. The vice president shall: _____.

Section 3. The secretary shall: _____.

Section 4. The treasurer shall: _____.

Section 5. The homeroom representative shall: _____.

ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS

Section 1. Elections for officers shall take place in the last ten (10) school days in April, or the first ten (10) days in May, prior to the school year in which officers are to serve.

Section 2. Elections for eleventh and twelth grade homeroom representatives shall be held within two (2) weeks after the election of the officers, and will be so designed that candidates unsuccessful in the election of officers can run for homeroom representative.

Section 3. Tenth grade representatives will be elected in their feeder junior high school in May, prior to their entrance into_____ Senior High. The number elected at large from each school shall be in accordance with the proportion of the total population of the tenth grade in which they will serve.

Section 4. The election of officers shall be voted on by the then-present tenth and eleventh grade representatives, while the election of representatives shall be voted on only by the class whose grade year the representative will be serving.

Section 5. The student council shall require no registration prior to the actual secret vote, and polls for all positions shall remain open at least two (2) days.

Section 6. The elections shall be under the direction of the elections committee.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section 1. The student council shall meet for business at least once a week during the school year, unless the assembly decides by a two-thirds vote to forego this schedule for a particular week. Meetings shall be held during one of the regularly scheduled student council periods of each week.

Section 2. Special meetings can be called by the president, the executive committee, the adviser, the principal, or by written request of ten (10) members. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. No previous notice is necessary if it is held during school. If held after school, at least one (1) day's notice is required.

Section 3. All legally elected representatives and officers may vote.

Section 4. A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. Any member of the student body may attend and participate in discussions, but must have written permission from the teacher whose class is being missed.

ARTICLE VII: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The elected officers and the standing committee chairpersons are the voting members of the executive committee. The appointed officers and the adviser are non-voting members.

Section 2. The executive committee shall meet at least two (2) days prior to the regularly scheduled student council meeting and plan an agenda, which is to be distributed to the members at the meetings.

Section 3. The executive committee shall be subject to the orders of the representative body of the student council, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the council.

Section 4. Special meetings of the executive committee may be called by the president, adviser, principal or upon written request of any three (3) members. No previous notice is required if the special meeting is held during school, but at least one (1) day's notice is required if it is to be held after school.

Section 5. The executive committee shall carry out all duties assigned to it in these bylaws and by the student council.

ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES

Section 1. The community service committee shall have the duties of: _____

Section 2. The social committee shall have the duties of: _____.

Section 3. The elections committee shall submit to the student council recommendations concerning nominations, campaigning, speeches, and balloting at

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least one month prior to student council grade-wide school elections. These recommendations are subject to at least a majority vote of the student council. The elections committee shall then be in charge of handling all aspects of the elections.

Section 4. Unless otherwise directed by the assembly, the minimum and maximum number of members of each standing committee shall be determined by the executive committee.

Section 5. Membership on any student council committee shall be open to any school student. Every representative must serve on at least one standing committee.

Section 6. Other committees, standing or special, may be appointed by either the council or its president as the council from time to time deems necessary to carry on its work.

Section 7. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

ARTICLE X: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern the student council in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rule of order the student council may accept.

ARTICLE XI: RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. The principal shall appoint an adviser to aid the student council in its activities and projects.

Section 2. All actions of the student council are subject to review and possible veto by the principal.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section 1. These bylaws can be amended at any regular meeting of the student council by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting. A hand count must then be taken in homerooms within one week after the student council as to the adoption or rejection of an amendment, a majority of the student body being needed to legalize the amendment.

Section 2. Each representative must bring a count of her/his homeroom vote, written in ink and signed by the homeroom teacher, to the president on the morning of the vote. The executive committee shall count and tabulate all homeroom votes.

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For full information on the many benefits of NASC/NASAA membership, publications lists, the Resource Information Center, our leadership training programs, or anything else about student councils, write the NASSP Office of Student Activities, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Va. 22091.